RED RIVER

23 story and art by Chie Shinohara

Story Thus Far:

Mursih II
The former Crown Prince Kail, now king of the Hittite Empire.

Yuri
A Japanese schoolgirl magically transported to the ancient Hittite Empire.

Ramses
Ambitious general of the Egyptian army and Kail's equal as a leader and visionary.

Junior high student Yuri is sucked through time and space to the ancient Hittite Empire! Evil Queen Nakia has drawn Yuri there to be a sacrifice to her god, Teshub. Rescued by the handsome and haughty Prince Kail, Yuri falls in love with him and decides to stay in the past.

Yuri's rebel forces attack and take control of the city of Thebes, breaking into Nefertiti's palace just in time to rescue Ramses. A search of Nefertiti's private quarters turns up conclusive evidence of her collusion with Nakia. With this evidence in hand, and her identity now revealed to Nefertiti, Yuri realizes it's time to return home. Knowing what her fate would be if he tried to keep Yuri in Egypt, Ramses offers no interference.

Assuming command of the Egyptian army, Ramses quickly puts down the rebellion. Meanwhile, Yuri and her aides board a ship and set out for Hittite territory. Taharqa, the rebel leader, is enraged with Yuri's seeming abandonment of the rebels and their cause and attempts to head off her escape. He is thwarted by Ramses who, unknown to Taharqa, has promised Yuri that he will hear the rebels' grievances.

When Yuri's ship reaches Byblos, she learns that city has recently been taken by Hittite troops led by Kail. But Kail has returned to Ugarit, so Yuri jumps on a horse and heads there at top speed!

KAIL...
KAIL...
KAIL...

KAIL!
I SHOULD LET HIM SLEEP... HE LOOKS SO...

MMMM...
RUSTLE

...?!
WHO DARES-?!
THUD
YEEK!

KAIL, IT...IT'S ME...
I DIDN'T WANT TO DISTURB YOU...
...BUT I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF... AND I FORGOT...

IS THIS A DREAM ...?
GASP
THE SAME DREAM I'VE BEEN HAVING EVERY NIGHT?
IT'S NOT A DREAM, KAIL...
I PROMISE, IT'S REAL... I'M REAL!
JUST LIKE YOU ARE, RIGHT NOW AND...
OH GOD...

IT REALLY IS YOU, YURI!
...AND I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH.
YES, I HAVE...
YOU'VE COME BACK TO ME!

IF I WOKE UP NOW, I...
YURI...

OH, KAIL!
FWUM

FWOOM
HE'S REAL, I'M REAL...
...AND WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN AT LAST!

BUT... BUT IT CAN'T!
LOVE
WHAT...?
I WANT THIS MOMENT TO LAST FOREVER AND EVER AND...
EVEN WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN THROUGH, THIS MOMENT MAKES IT ALL WORTHWHILE!
NO DREAM COULD BE AS WONDERFUL AS THIS!

KAIL... KAIL, I'M SO SORRY!
...I LOST OUR BABY, KAIL!
I LOST...
OUR BABY!
PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
WHAT IS THERE TO FORGIVE?
YOU DIDN'T TAKE THE CHILD FROM US.

THE GODS FELL IN LOVE WITH HIM..
...AND WANTED HIM BACK, THAT'S ALL.
HE'S IN HEAVEN NOW, AND WISHES US ONLY HAPPINESS.

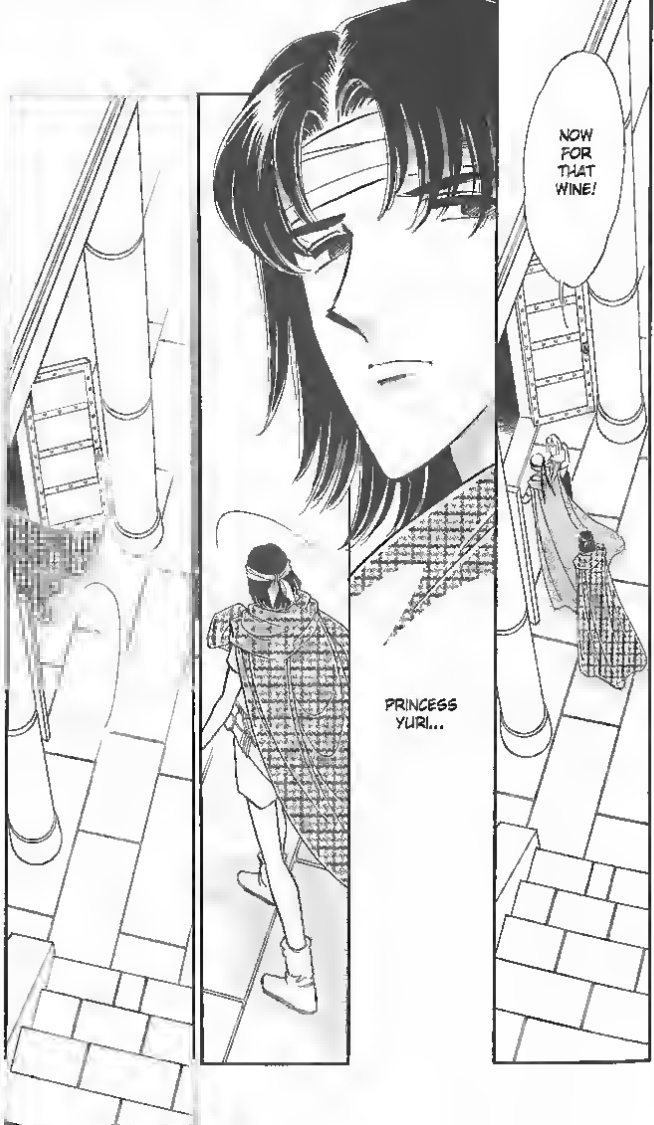
FOR ME, THE GREATEST SORROW WOULD HAVE BEEN TO LOSE YOU...
KAIL!
BWAAHAA

...AND BY ALL THAT'S HOLY, I'VE BEEN SPARED THAT
I ASK FOR NOTHING ELSE.

HEY!
IS IT TRUE PRINCESS YURI'S RETURNED?!
HAS HIS MAJESTY—
WHUP
TH
WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?!
WHO TRIPPED ME?!

KASH! RUSAFA!
I DID, BIG MOUTH.
WE'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T DISTURB THEM.
PRINCESS YURI IS WITH HIS MAJESTY.
SHE'LL ARRIVE LATER WITH ILBANI AND HADI.
SHE REMAINED IN BYBLOS TO RECUPERATE.
WHAT?
I REGRET TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT RYUI ISN'T HERE.
EEGH
WHAT'S *WRONG* WITH HER?
IS SHE SICK OR SOMETHING?

NICE TO SEE YOU'RE CONCERNED.
YES, ESPECIALLY SINCE SHE'S GOING TO MAKE YOU A FATHER.
A FATHER?
YOU MEAN RYUI IS...
...PREGNANT?!
SLAP!
SMACK
KOFF
EXACTLY SO!
WHICH CALLS FOR A ROUND OF DRINKS!
THE BEST TAVERN, THE FINEST WINE, YOUR TREAT!
THIS IS GREAT NEWS...
...BUT WITH HIS MAJESTY'S LOSS, I CAN'T...
KOFF
KOFF
DON'T GIVE IT A THOUGHT, KIKKURI!
PRINCESS YURI IS BACK, SO ALL'S RIGHT WITH HIS MAJESTY'S WORLD. HE'LL BE DELIGHTED FOR YOU!


NOW FOR THAT WINE!
PRINCESS YURI...

MAY I ASK...
...
...WHY RAMSES...
...DIDN'T FORCE HIMSELF ON YOU?
...HE DIDN'T?
HOW... HOW DO YOU KNOW...

I CAN TELL.
YOUR REACTION TO MY TOUCH HASN'T CHANGED.
KAIL!
UH!
TWITCH
YOU STILL RESPOND JUST AS YOU ALWAYS HAVE.

MRM...!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE NECKLACE THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS GAVE YOU?
OH... I GAVE IT...
...OR RATHER, RETURNED IT,... TO QUEEN NEFERTITI.
I SEE.
?!
THEN I'LL FIND SOMETHING FINER FOR YOU TO WEAR
UNTIL THEN...

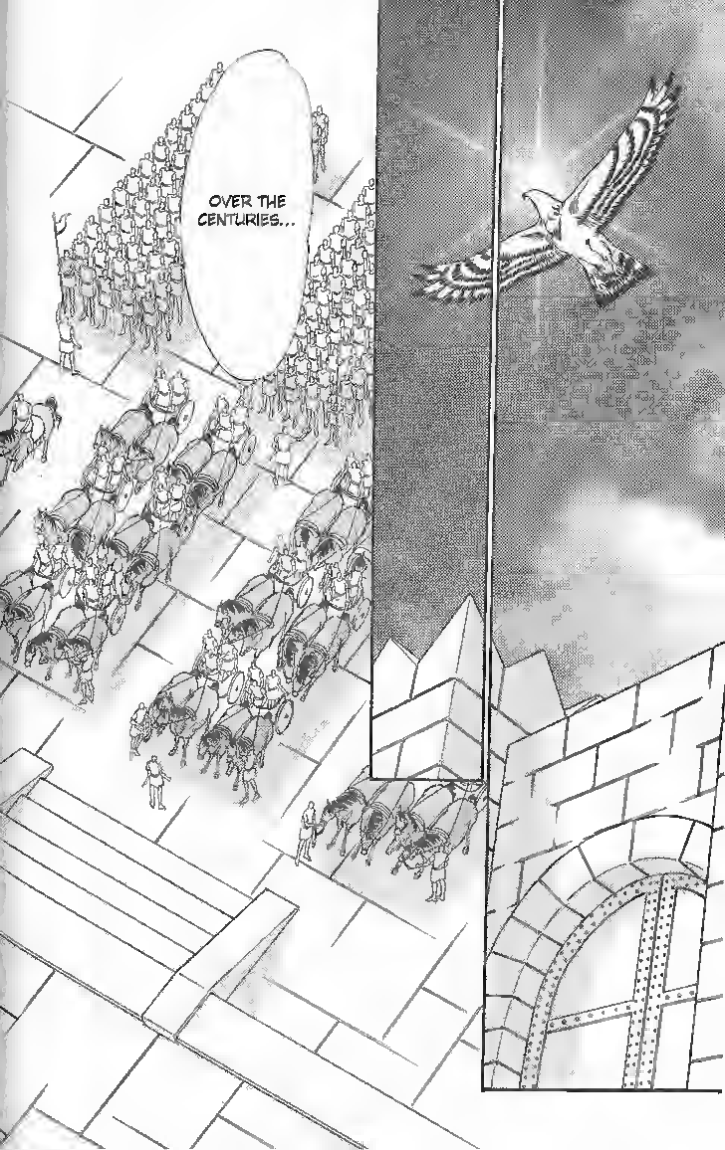
KAIL...
D...DON'T!
IF YOU LEAVE A MARK ON MY NECK, EVERYONE WILL SEE IT!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
WAIT, KAIL!
THE TIME I SPENT WITH MY TROOPS AT THE FRONT WAS QUITE A STRAIN...

...WHICH I ENDURED.
...BY THINKING OF YOU, AND REMEMBERING TIMES LIKE THIS.
TOMORROW I'LL RESUME MY DUTIES AS KING OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE
BUT TONIGHT, WITH YOU, I'M JUST KAIL.
THE WORLD CAN GO ON WITHOUT ME... AND YOU... FOR THAT LONG, I THINK.

THERE'S SO MUCH I WANT TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT, THINGS THAT HAPPENED WHILE WE WERE APART...
...THINGS WE NEED TO DEAL WITH...

...PLAGUES ON THE PRESENT... THREATS TO THE FUTURE... I CAN'T SEEM TO FOCUS...
...ON ANY OF THAT RIGHT NOW.

...IS MELTING ALL MY THOUGHTS AWAY.
THE WARMTH OF HIS EMBRACE AND THE FEEL OF HIS SKIN ON MINE...


OVER THE CENTURIES...

...FAR TOO MANY RULERS HAVE...
...INDULGED THEIR APPETITES...
...TO THE NEGLECT OF AFFAIRS OF STATE, BRINGING THEIR NATIONS TO RUIN.
WE CITIZENS OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE..

...YOUR MAJESTY
...DO NOT NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT, FOR WHICH I AM EXTREMELY GRATEFUL...
YAWN
EVEN IF I WANTED TO DO THAT...
TIME FOR YOUR MORNING REVIEW OF THE ROYAL GUARDS!
YOUR MAJESTY!
KLOP
...MY LADY WOULD NEVER ALLOW IT!
HEY! ILBANI!

WHEN DID YOU ARRIVE?
YOU'RE BACK! HADI, RYU! AND SHALA TOO! THAT'S GREAT!
...TO SEE YOU LOOKING SO WELL, PRINCESS YURI.
EARLY THIS MORNING. I'M PLEASED...
YAY!
PRIN-CESS YURI...
HADI!
...HAVE YOU GIVEN THE ITEM TO HIS MAJESTY?
OUR SHIP SAILED FROM RASHID...
...SOON AFTER YOURS

YES...
..THIS MORNING HE...
CERTAINLY, SIR.
WE HAVE THINGS TO DISCUSS, ILBANI.
SEE ME IN MY OFFICE AFTER THE REVIEW.

KAIL...
...I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU.
A SOUVENIR FROM EGYPT, YOU MIGHT SAY.
TO BE PRECISE A LETTER ADDRESSED TO NEFERTITI.

IS . IS THIS GENUINE ?!
YES. ILBANI AND RAMSES CONFIRMED IT
YOU SUSPECTED QUEEN NAKIA WAS PASSING INFORMA-TION...
...TO THE EGYPTIANS, BUT SHE WAS TOO CAREFUL TO LEAVE CONCRETE PROOF IN HITTITE TERRITORY
WHAT SHE DIDN'T ANTICIPATE WAS OUR FINDING IT IN EGYPT.
AN INTACT LETTER TO NEFERTITI...
...WITH QUEEN NAKIA'S PERSONAL SEAL!

YURI, YOU MAY VERY WELL HAVE CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY!
THERE'S A SOBERING THOUGHT...
PRINCESS YURI?
EH?
OH.. SURE.
WOULD YOU LIKE...
...TO HAVE BREAKFAST IN THE ROOM NEXT TO HIS MAJESTY'S OFFICE?
YAK
YAK

KIKKURI! THE TWINS HAVE RETURNED, Y'KNOW.
HAVE YOU SEEN RYUI? HAVE YOU TALKED WITH HER?
UM. . NO, NOT YET...
WHY NOT? AREN'T YOU ANXIOUS TO BE WITH THE MOTHER OF YOUR BABY?
RYUI? BUT...
...SHALA'S THE ONE WHO'S PREGNANT.
Funny if she did have twins...
FLICK
LOVE MUST GIVE YOU SPECIAL SIGHT.
WE'RE IMPRESSED, KIKKURI.
IT'S AMAZING YOU CAN EVEN TELL THE TWINS APART!
RYUI MAY HAVE TWINS, SO YOU MIGHT WANNA BRACE YOURSELF!
Baby?

WHAAT?!

We thought Kikkuri was seeing Ryu!

I DIDN'T KNOW SHALA AND KIKKURI WERE AN ITEM.

HOW SWEET!

Couldn't tell 'em apart after all.

Hear that?

WE BOTH SAW KIKKURI WITHOUT TELLING HIM...♡

GIGGLE ♡

WE SHARE THE SAME TASTE IN FOOD..♡

MEN..♡

CATS AND DOGS

OH, YES MA'AM!

...YOU WILL LOOK AFTER *BOTH* MY SISTERS, RIGHT?

KIKKURI...

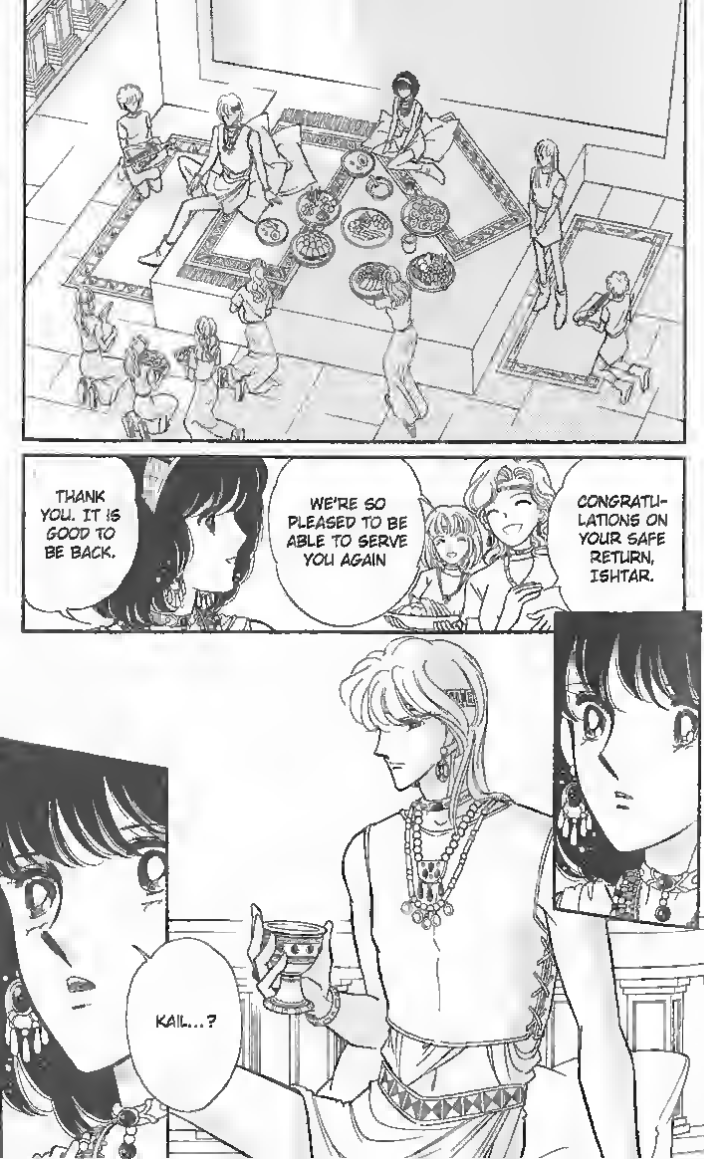
YOUR TRIP TO EGYPT WAS A FRUITFUL ONE, ILBANI. ONCE I PRESENT THIS LETTER...
...TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, THAT WILL BE THE END OF NAKIA.
AS I'D EXPECTED, SIR.
ALL CREDIT FOR THIS MUST GO TO PRINCESS YURI, HOWEVER

I DID ADVISE HER TO INSTIGATE THE REBELLION IN ASWAN, BUT SHE MADE IT HAPPEN...
...AND TO SUCH EFFECT THAT WE REACHED THEBES AND WERE ABLE TO SEARCH THE PALACE OF QUEEN NEFERTITI.
WILL YOU RETURN TO HATTUSA IMMEDIATELY, YOUR MAJESTY?
IMMEDI-ATELY ...?
NO, ILBANI...

WITH QUEEN NEFERTITI OUT OF THE WAY, EGYPT WILL BE ABLE TO FOCUS ON THE CONFLICT WITH US.
THE WAR, FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, IS LIKELY TO ESCALATE.
AND WITH RAMSES FREE TO LEAD THEM, THE EGYPTIAN ARMY WILL REGAIN ITS FOOTING IN SHORT ORDER. I HAVE NO DOUBT THEY'LL BE EAGER TO RETAKE BYBLOS.
IF THERE WAS EVER A TIME FOR ME TO STAY WITH MY TROOPS, IT'S NOW.
THE WAR... ESCALATE...

ILBANI...
...I ENTRUST QUEEN NAKIA'S LETTER TO YOU.
VERY WELL, SIR.
YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO THE DESTINY OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE AS WELL AS I DO...
...SO I NEEDN'T ELABORATE ON WHAT I'M ASKING OF YOU.
CHNK

I UNDERSTAND PERFECTLY.
OF COURSE, SIR
AND SO WE'RE YANKED BACK INTO THE AFFAIRS OF THE WORLD.
PRINCESS YURI, YOUR BREAKFAST IS READY.
I'M BETTING WE AIN'T SEEN NUTHIN' YET!
OH... THANK YOU, HADI.


THANK YOU. IT IS GOOD TO BE BACK.
WE'RE SO PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO SERVE YOU AGAIN
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR SAFE RETURN, ISHTAR.
KAIL...?

IS KAIL THE FIRST PERSON IN HISTORY TO EVER SAY THAT?
THAT'S RIGHT.
SO I WANT THIS UPCOMING CONFLICT WITH EGYPT TO BE THE LAST.
IT WILL BE TERRIBLE, AND THERE'S NO AVOIDING IT. BUT IF THE WILL AND THE POWERS OF MYSELF AND MY NATION ARE UP TO IT, AS I BELIEVE THEY ARE, WE WILL MAKE THIS THE WAR TO END ALL WARS.
KAIL HAD HOPED TO WORK SIDE BY SIDE WITH HIS BROTHER, PRINCE ZANNANZA, TO ACHIEVE IT.
WITH HIS BROTHER GONE, KAIL HAS HAD TO PURSUE THAT DREAM ALONE
YOU SAW THE HITTITES NOT AS AGGRESSORS, OR THE VICTIMS OF AGGRESSION.
.. BUT AS A STRONG NATION DEDICATED TO BRINGING PEACE AND STABILITY TO THE ORIENT.
A GRAND, WONDERFUL DREAM!
IS SUCH A THING POSSIBLE?
YOU REMEMBER BEFORE I BECAME KING. .
..I SAID I HAD A VISION TO TRANSFORM THE EMPIRE INTO AN IDEAL NATION?
OF COURSE I REMEMBER.
YOU'RE NOT EATING. WHAT'S WRONG?
I'M JUST THINKING ..
...ABOUT THIS WAR, AND IF IT WAS POSSIBLE TO MAKE IT THE LAST ONE THE EMPIRE EVER HAS TO FIGHT.

PFT
DON'T GET ME WRONG...
...I KNOW I SPEAK MORE OF HOPE THAN CERTAINTY
AFTER ALL HOW CAN ONE MAN CHANGE FUNDA-MENTAL HUMAN INCLINATION?
NEVER-THELESS, I CAN AT LEAST INSURE THAT MY NATION FIGHTS NO MORE WARS DURING MY REIGN

IT IS A TALL ORDER, KAIL...
...BUT YOU...
...CAN ACHIEVE IT, IF ANYONE CAN
OF THIS I'M CERTAIN...
BUT I WONDER IF ANYONE ELSE THINKS SO?

...HIS FINGERS GET COLD AS ICE.
WHEN KAIL IS NERVOUS...
...AS CERTAIN AS I AM THAT I LOVE YOU.
THE BURDEN ON HIS SHOULDERS IS ENORMOUS, AND THERE ARE SO MANY EXPECTATIONS.
AT LEAST I CAN...
...WARM THOSE COLD FINGERS, AND HIS LIPS...

YOU'RE RIGHT, YURI.
...AND STAY AT HIS SIDE FOR AS LONG AS I LIVE.
WITH ISHTAR THE GODDESS OF WAR STANDING WITH ME, I CAN SEE IT THROUGH

AND WHEN ISHTAR'S WORK...
...IS DONE, I'LL STILL BE YOUR BELOVED YURI.
IN THE UPCOMING CONFLICT...
...YOU WILL TRIUMPH, KAIL. HAVE NO DOUBT OF IT!
AND HAVE NO DOUBT WE ARE TOGETHER... FOREVER!

YOUR MAJESTY!
THE SCOUT SENT TO EGYPT HAS RETURNED!
YOUR MAJESTY!
HIS FORCE IS EXPECTED TO NUMBER OVER 20,000!
THE GENERALS FROM THE PROVINCES ARE JOINING HIM AS HE ADVANCES!
PHARAOH HOREMHEB HAS LEFT THEBES AT THE HEAD OF HIS ARMY!

SUMMON ALL INFANTRY BATTALIONS AND ARCHERY AND CHARIOT UNITS TO UGARIT!
OH GOD... IT'S WAR, ALL-OUT WAR!
YES, SIR!
RECRUIT AS MANY TROOPS AS POSSIBLE, ANYWHERE YOU CAN FIND THEM!
GASP
20,000?!
FOR THIS ERA, THAT'S IMMENSE!
SEND WORD TO EVERY CORNER OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE, ITS ALLIES AND TRIBUTARIES!

THERE ARE RUMORS OF A HUGE BATTLE BREWING.
IF SO, THE PALACE WILL BE STOCKED TO THE CEILINGS WITH SUPPLIES.
OH, THEN I'LL DO SOME GROCERY SHOPPING.
THAT'S NOT YOUR JOB.
BUT YURI ISHTAR LOVES DRIED JUJUBES.
WE DON'T WANT TO RUN OUT.
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

I'LL TAKE A BASKET-FUL.
THESE JUJUBES ARE FROM BABYLONIA.
MA'AM...
MA'AM...
ARE YOU ADDRESS-ING ME?

YES, MA'AM. MAY I HAVE A WORD?
HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO EARN TWO SILVER SHEKELS?
PARDON?
I JUST WANT TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS
IT WON'T TAKE LONG. I PROMISE.
I...I DON'T KNOW...
PLEASE TAKE THIS AND COME WITH ME.

...IF YURI ISHTAR HAS BROUGHT SOMETHING BACK FROM EGYPT.
I JUST WANT TO KNOW...
...A TOTAL STRANGER LIKE YOU!
EVEN IF I KNEW, I WOULDN'T TELL...
I'M JUST A SERVANT! HOW CAN I KNOW ANYTHING LIKE THAT?!
CHING
...I MUST OFFER A FURTHER INDUCEMENT...
SQUIK
IN THAT CASE...

WHFF
...TO PUT YOU IN A MORE .. RECEPTIVE STATE.
THUD
SLUMP
SHFF SHFF
I'M VERY CON-CERNED ABOUT THIS MATTER, AS IT...
...MAY REQUIRE QUICK ACTION ON MY PART.

IF THIS IS SO...
THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT QUEEN NEFERTITI HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM POWER
AND I WONDER IF SOME KIND OF EVIDENCE LINKING HER AND QUEEN NAKIA HAS BEEN BROUGHT OUT OF EGYPT.
RUSTLE
..THAT EVIDENCE MUST NEVER REACH HATTUSA.

HATTUSA
HITTITE EMPIRE
(RED RIVER)
KANESH
KING MURSILI II OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE HAS ISSUED A DECREE...
ARZAWA
KIZWATNA
KARKEMISH
KHALEB
NEW MITANNI
UGARIT
...DIRECTING THAT ALL THE HITTITE FORCES AMASS IN UGARIT!
BEIDA
BYBLOS
ASSYRIA
SIDON
"ALL ABLE-BODIED HITTITES ARE CALLED ON TO DO THEIR DUTY!"
BABYLONIA
MEMPHIS
THE KINGDOM OF EGYPT
(THE NILE)
THEBES

PRINCESS YURI!
...THE MEN RESPONDING TO HIS MAJESTY'S CALL HAVE STARTED TO ARRIVE!
PRINCESS YURI...
ALREADY?
THAT'S ENCOURAG-ING!

TROOMP
TROOMP
TROOMP
DO WE KNOW WHERE THEY CAME FROM?
I'LL GO OUT TO WELCOME THEM.
IT'S THE ARMY OF PRINCE ROIS TELIPINU, THE GOVERNOR OF KHALEB.
THIS IS GREAT NEWS! PRINCE TELIPINU...
...IS KAIL'S ELDER BROTHER!

ROAR
TROOMP
TROOMP
TROOMP
YOUR MAJESTY.
SO THIS IS IT, EH?
TELIPINU!
MY APOLOGIES FOR NOT PARTICIPATING IN YOUR PAST CAMPAIGNS, DESPITE MY PROXIMITY TO UGARIT.
NOT PARTICIPATING?
YOUR LOGISTICAL SUPPORT WAS ALWAYS VITAL.
GREETINGS, YURI ISHTAR I'M PLEASED TO SEE HIS MAJESTY RETAINING A CAPABLE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FOR THIS AFFAIR
THANK YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS.
GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, PRINCE TELIPINU

YOUR MAJESTY, YOUR ARMY IS NOW ASSEMBLED AND AT FULL STRENGTH.
ALL YOUR COMMANDERS ARE PRESENT AND PREPARED TO REPORT
PROCEED.

SIR! THE ROYAL GUARDS ARE READY TO MOVE OUT
AND THE INFANTRY UNITS, SIR.
AS ARE THE CHARIOT UNITS, SIR.
ARCHERY UNITS AS WELL, SIR. WE AWAIT YOUR ORDERS.

THE TROOPS FROM KIZWATNA SHOULD ARRIVE THERE SHORTLY.
OUR ALLIES HAVE DEPLOYED THEIR FORCES AT UGARIT.
THE EGYPTIAN ARMY IS A DAUNTING FORCE.
WE CAN NEVER BE TOO READY TO FACE SUCH AN OPPONENT.
THIS FULL-SCALE MOBILIZATION IS WHAT THE ENEMY EXPECTS OF US, AND WE WILL NOT DISAPPOINT!
ROAR
ROAR
ROAR

I RESPECT BOTH MEN, AND CAN ONLY HOPE...
...THEIR RIVALRY DOESN'T MAR THEIR JUDGMENT!
I'M SURE KAIL IS THINKING OF RAMSES, NOT PHARAOH HOREMHEB.
AND NO DOUBT KAIL IS FOREMOST IN RAMSES' THOUGHTS

HAS HE?!
THEN BRING HIM IN! AT ONCE!
...HAS JUST ARRIVED.
YOUR MAJESTY, A CERTAIN INDISPENSABLE ALLY...
KLANK
AN INDISPENSABLE ALLY?
YOUR MAJESTY KING MURSILI II...
IT'S A GREAT HONOR TO COME BEFORE YOU AGAIN.
KLANK

KLANK
KLANK
AH...
RUSTLE
AND A DISTINCT PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, YURI ISHTAR.

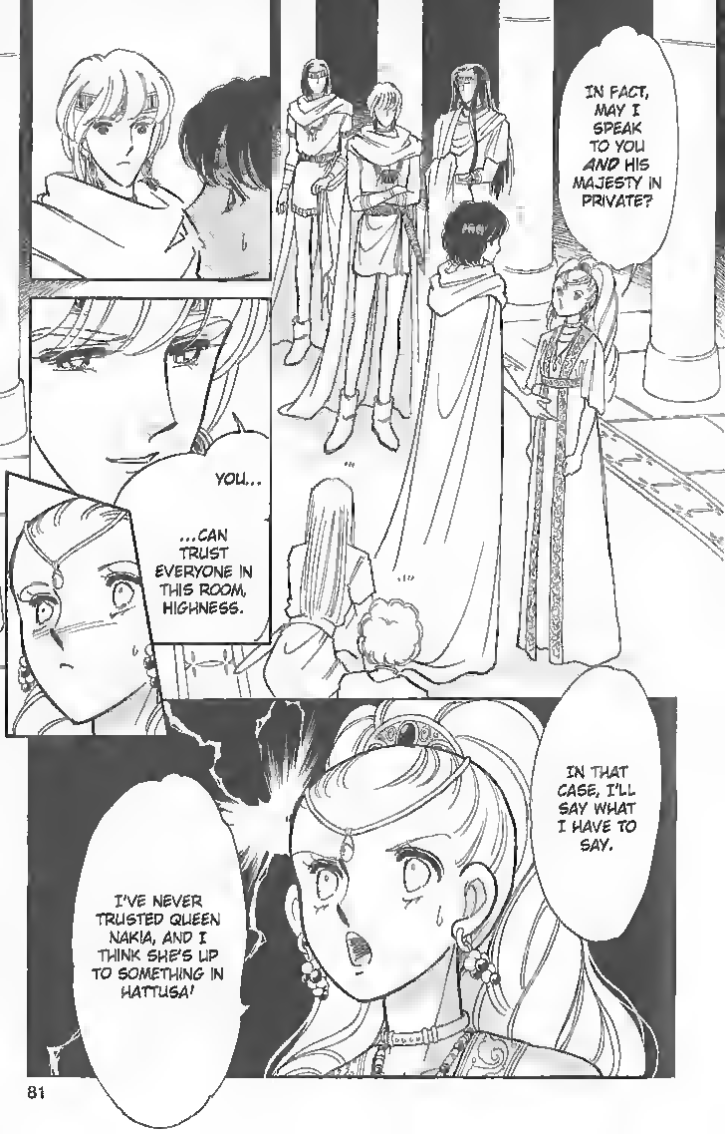
THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS!

IT'S... IT'S BEEN AGES!
HOW'VE YOU BEEN?
HE IS A PRINCE NO LONGER, ISHTAR.
THIS IS HIS MAJESTY KING MATTIWAZA I OF THE NEW MITANNI KINGDOM.
WOW! YOU'VE MOVED UP IN THE WORLD!
INDEED. AFTER HIS MAJESTY MURSILI II GRANTED ME A PARDON...
...I WAS ALLOWED TO RETURN TO MY COUNTRY AND ASCEND THE THRONE

THAT'S EXCELLENT!
THEY WILL BE INVALUABLE, KING MATTIWAZA.
MITANNI IS RENOWNED FOR ITS CHARIOTEERS.
I HAVEN'T SEEN COMBAT FOR SOME TIME, SO I HOPE..
...I'M STILL ABLE TO REPAY YOU FOR HELPING ME REBUILD MY COUNTRY.
PRIN... I MEAN, YOUR MAJESTY..
...ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS? ABOUT FIGHTING EGYPT?
YOUR ELDER SISTER IS STILL THERE, AFTER ALL...
THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS..
SO BRUTAL THAT PEOPLE CALLED HIM THE PRINCE OF BLOOD!
HE WENT BACK TO BABYLONIA AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF MITANNI..
...AND NOW HE RETURNS AS A KING AND ALLY!

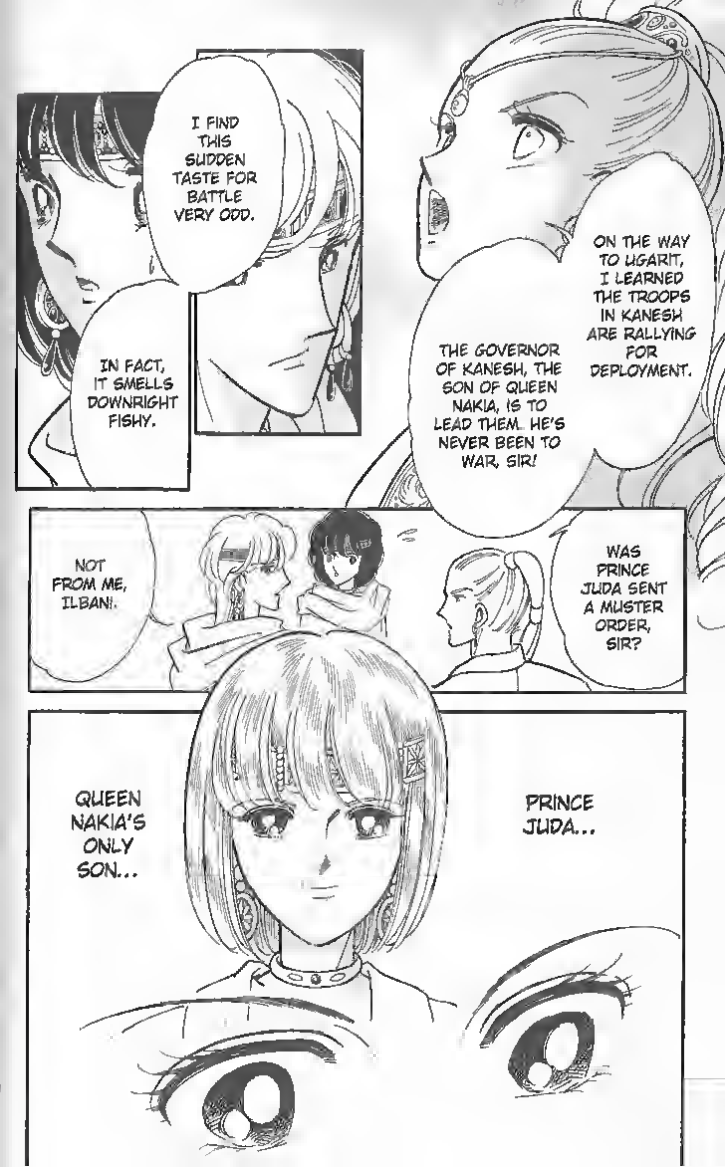
MY SISTER IS NO MORE THAN A FADING MEMORY.
THERE IS NOW ONLY QUEEN NEFERTITI OF EGYPT.
THAT IS OF NO MOMENT, ISHTAR.
...YOU MUST BE TIRED FROM YOUR TRAVELS, AND WE'VE WINE...
YOUR HIGHNESS, YOUR MAJESTY...
...I'VE NOTHING TO SAY TO THAT.
WELL...
TRUP
TRUP
TRUP
GLOM
BIG SISTER ISHTAR!
AWP!

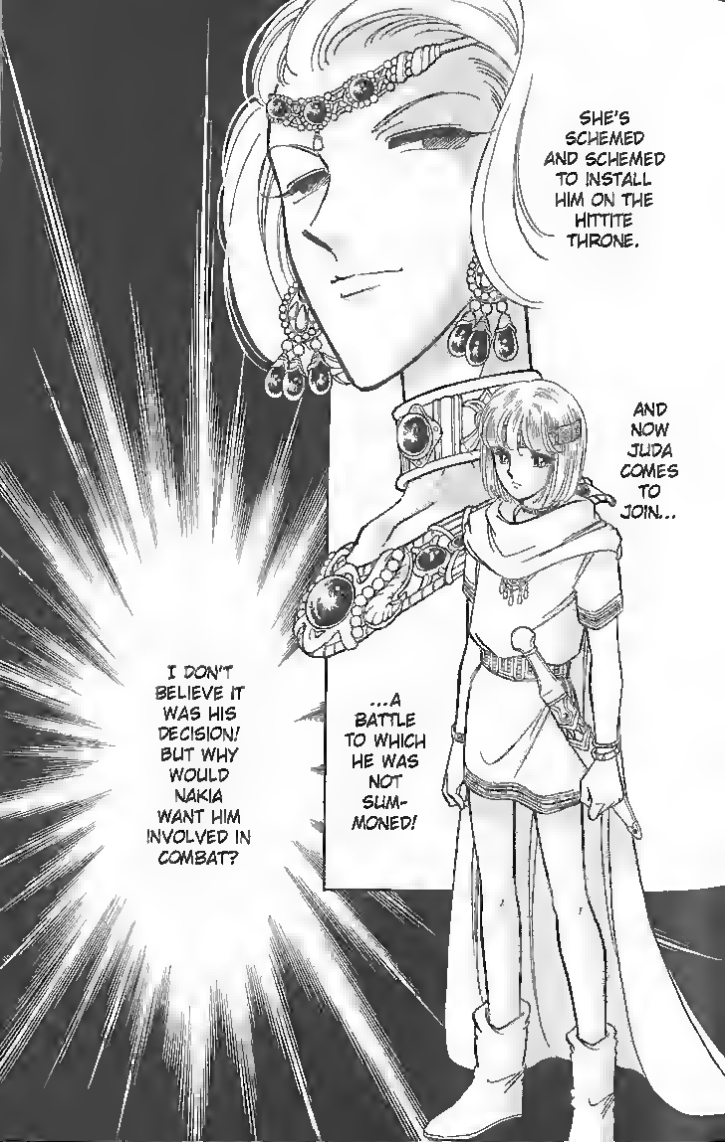
I GOT TIRED OF WAITING FOR YOU TO RETURN TO HATTUSA SO I DECIDED TO COME HERE!
PRINCESS ALEXANDRA!
I'M NOT ALONE! I CAME WITH TROOPS FROM ARZAWA!
GIGGLE
ALEXANDRA, FIRST PRINCESS OF THE KINGDOM OF ARZAWA.
SHE'S BEEN SPENDING TIME IN HATTUSA AS A GUEST OF MINE.
WHO'S THAT LITTLE MINX?
...I NEED TO TALK TO YOU!
YES, BUT BEFORE THAT...
...
LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE'S COMING TO THIS PARTY.
WOULD YOU CARE FOR SOME WINE?


IN FACT, MAY I SPEAK TO YOU AND HIS MAJESTY IN PRIVATE?
YOU...
...CAN TRUST EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM, HIGHNESS.
IN THAT CASE, I'LL SAY WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.
I'VE NEVER TRUSTED QUEEN NAKIA, AND I THINK SHE'S UP TO SOMETHING IN HATTUSA!

SHE HASN'T LEFT HER PALACE SINCE NEWS OF ISHTAR'S RETURN FROM EGYPT REACHED HATTUSA
WELL, PRESUMPTUOUS AS IT MAY SEEM. .
...I'VE BEEN KEEPING A CLOSE EYE ON HER ACTIVITIES OF LATE
OH? SUCH AS...?
SHE'S EVEN CURTAILED HER NORMAL TEMPLE VISITATIONS
MOST PEOPLE ARE FINE WITH THAT...
...BUT I'M CERTAIN SOMETHING FIENDISH IS AFOOT!

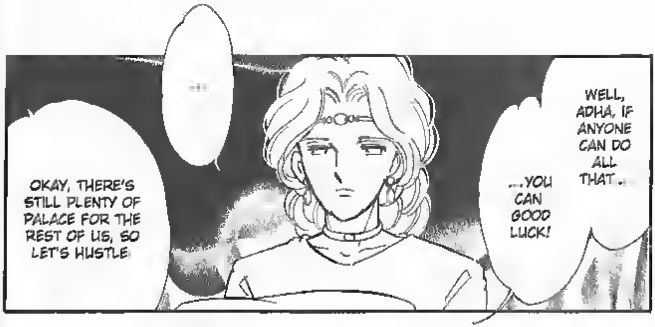
SHE WON'T REST UNTIL SHE DOES SOMETHING ABOUT IT!
DOES NAKIA SUSPECT I'VE BROUGHT ONE OF HER LETTERS BACK FROM EGYPT?
IF SO, WE'VE GOT TROUBLE!
PLEASE, YOUR MAJESTY, THAT'S NOT ALL I HAVE TO REPORT!
PRIN-CESS ALEXAN-DRA..
...I SALUTE YOUR INITIATIVE

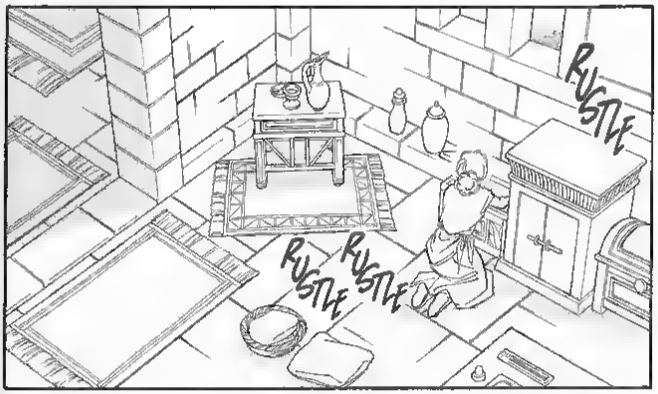

I FIND THIS SUDDEN TASTE FOR BATTLE VERY ODD.
IN FACT, IT SMELLS DOWNRIGHT FISHY.
ON THE WAY TO UGARIT, I LEARNED THE TROOPS IN KANESH ARE RALLYING FOR DEPLOYMENT.
THE GOVERNOR OF KANESH, THE SON OF QUEEN NAKIA, IS TO LEAD THEM. HE'S NEVER BEEN TO WAR, SIR!
WAS PRINCE JUDA SENT A MUSTER ORDER, SIR?
NOT FROM ME, ILBANI.
QUEEN NAKIA'S ONLY SON...
PRINCE JUDA...

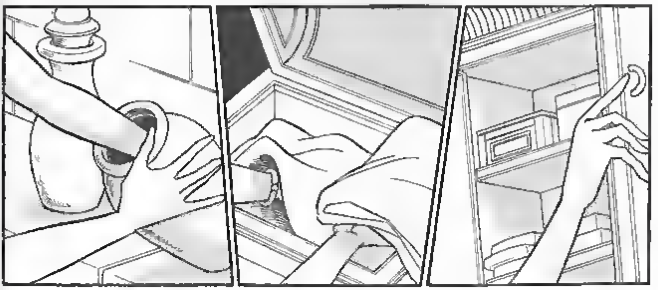

SHE'S SCHEMED AND SCHEMED TO INSTALL HIM ON THE HITTITE THRONE.
AND NOW JUDA COMES TO JOIN...
...A BATTLE TO WHICH HE WAS NOT SUM-MONED!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT WAS HIS DECISION! BUT WHY WOULD NAKIA WANT HIM INVOLVED IN COMBAT?

YOUR PARDON, LADIES!
WE MUST INSPECT YOUR BELONGINGS BEFORE YOU ENTER THE PALACE.
EXCUSE ME?
WE ARE PRINCESS YURI'S SERVANTS, COME ALL THE WAY FROM HATTUSA. WHY WOULD YOU DETAIN US?
WE HAVE ORDERS FROM HIS MAJESTY'S CHIEF ADVISOR, ILBANI, TO SEARCH EVERYONE NO EXCEPTIONS.
SECURITY'S REALLY GOTTEN TIGHT LATELY.
THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE, SINCE WE'LL SOON BE AT WAR.
IF ILBANI BELIEVES THIS IS NECESSARY, THEN IT IS
THAT'S RIGHT. HIS MAJESTY HAS COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN HIM.
AND HE'S POISED TO BECOME THE NEXT CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE STAYING IN THE PALACE RIGHT NOW, SO DON'T LOLLYGAG
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET ALL THE ROOMS MADE UP
SEARCH THE BELONGINGS OF YOUR KING AND HIS AIDES, FIND OUT IF THEY'RE HIDING ANYTHING.
...THE WEST WING TO ME.
YOU MAY LEAVE...
IF THEY ARE, YOU'LL KNOW IT WHEN YOU SEE IT.
AND THEY'RE HUGE!
YOU SURE? THAT INCLUDES ILBANI'S LIVING QUARTERS

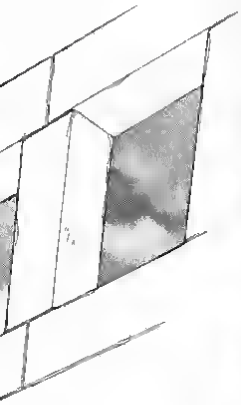

...
OKAY, THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF PALACE FOR THE REST OF US, SO LET'S HUSTLE!
...YOU CAN GOOD LUCK!
WELL, ADHA, IF ANYONE CAN DO ALL THAT...

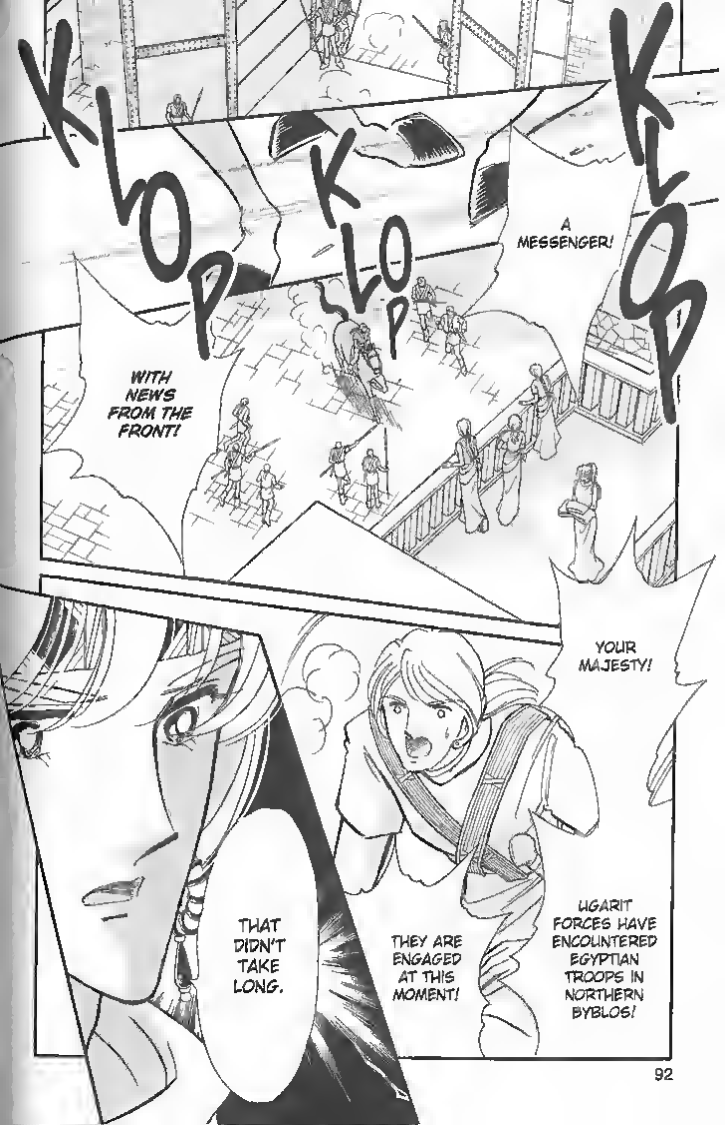

RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE



KLANK
BANG
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
...

...
SQUEE
KLUNK




KLOP
KLOP
KLOP
A MESSENGER!
WITH NEWS FROM THE FRONT!
YOUR MAJESTY!
UGARIT FORCES HAVE ENCOUNTERED EGYPTIAN TROOPS IN NORTHERN BYBLOS!
THEY ARE ENGAGED AT THIS MOMENT!
THAT DIDN'T TAKE LONG.

YES, SIR!
KIKKURI, HAVE THE KIZWATNA FORCES DEPLOY JUST BEHIND THE FRONT-LINES.
AT ONCE, YOUR MAJESTY.
BROTHER, WILL YOU PLEASE LEAD YOUR TROOPS TO THE SOUTH OF BEIDA?
ASSEMBLE MY TROOPS OUTSIDE THE PALACE.
YURI!
YES, SIR!
SO IT BEGINS!

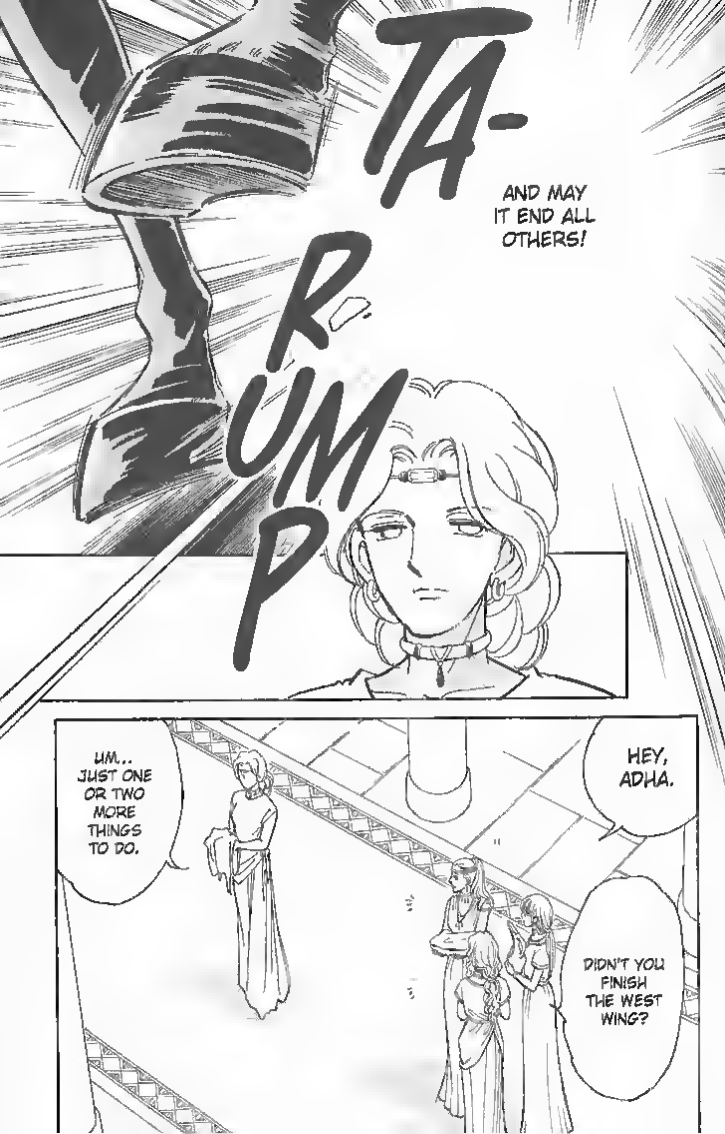
AND IT MAY BE FROM EGYPT?
WHAT DOES IT SAY?
I DON'T KNOW. IT'S WRITTEN IN AKKADIAN, SO I COULDN'T READ IT.
YOU SAY YOU FOUND...
...A LETTER HIDDEN IN ILBANI'S ROOM?
AKKADIAN IS THE LANGUAGE OF OFFICIAL-DOM IN THIS REGION. QUEEN NAKIA USED IT IN HER LETTERS TO QUEEN NEFERTITI
THIS COULD BE ONE OF THOSE MISSIVES!

YOU WILL GET THAT LETTER ...
...AND BRING IT TO ME.
I DON'T THINK...
..I CAN GET IT THROUGH PALACE SECURITY.
YES, THE RISK WOULD BE TOO GREAT.
...YOU WILL DESTROY IT, EVEN IF IT COSTS YOU YOUR LIFE.
AS YOU CANNOT BRING IT TO ME...
YES... SIR.

I'LL ACCOMPANY THE TROOPS!
BRING ASLAN TO THE FRONT GATE FOR ME!
YES, MA'AM!
OUR BEST WISHES GO WITH YOU, ISHTAR!
WE'LL AWAIT YOUR SAFE RETURN
THANK YOU!
STAY BUSY AND DON'T WORRY!

...WILL FIND REST, CARE AND COMFORT WHEN THEY RETURN.
WE MUST KEEP THIS PLACE IN ORDER SO OUR SOLDIERS ..
ALL RIGHT!
I WOULD DEARLY LOVE TO DEAL WITH NAKIA NOW...
...BUT THE CONFLICT WITH EGYPT COMES FIRST. ILBANI WILL KEEP THAT LETTER SAFE IN THE MEANTIME.

AS LONG AS WE HAVE THAT LETTER, THE DAYS OF NAKIA'S AUTHORITY AS QUEEN DOWAGER ARE NUMBERED!
NOW... IT'S TIME FOR WAR!
NEIGH

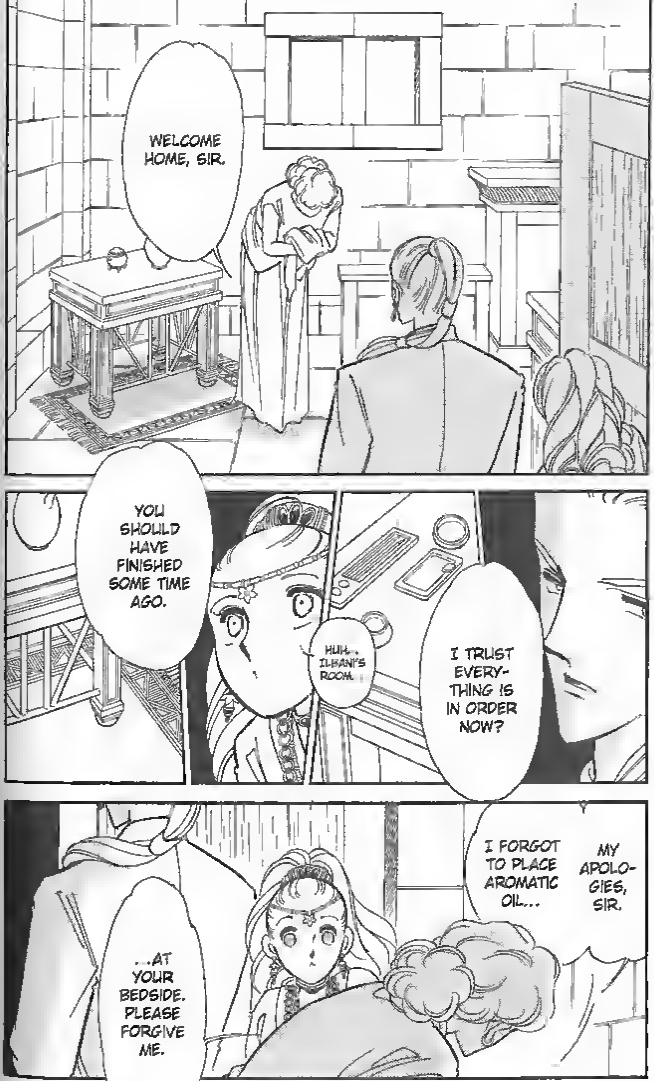

TA-
R-UMP
AND MAY IT END ALL OTHERS!
HEY, ADHA.
UM.. JUST ONE OR TWO MORE THINGS TO DO.
DIDN'T YOU FINISH THE WEST WING?

NEED ANY HELP?
THANKS, BUT I CAN MANAGE.
I'VE BROUGHT AROMATIC OIL FOR THE CHIEF ADVISOR'S QUARTERS.
GOTTA SAY, ADHA...
...YOU DON'T MISS A DETAIL.
CREAK

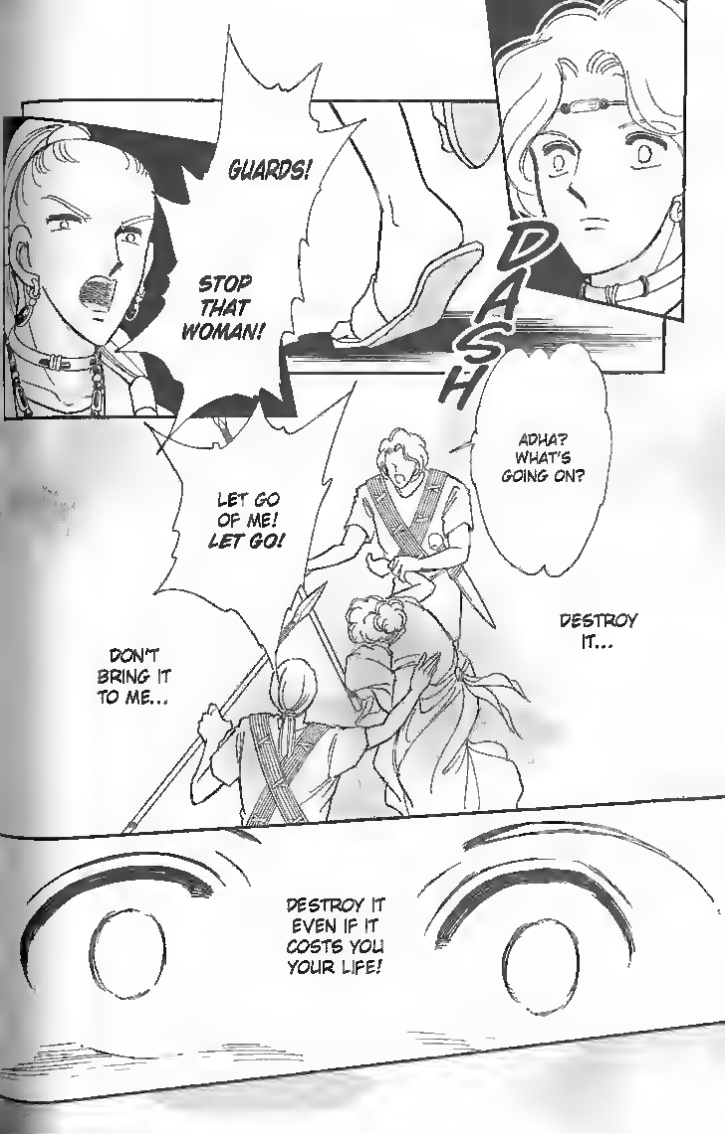
KLUNK

ILBANI!
YOU'VE GOTTA LET ME TO GO TO THE BATTLE-FIELD!
THE BATTLE-FIELD IS NO PLACE FOR A HIGHBORN LADY...
...PRINCESS ALEXANDRA.
I MUST CHANGE MY CLOTHES AND GO TO THE TEMPLE.
SO IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...
NO! I'LL PESTER YOU UNTIL YOU SAY YES!
BUT YURI ISHTAR'S A LADY, AND SHE'S LEADING HIS MAJESTY'S TROOPS!
WHY CAN'T I BE LIKE HER AND JOIN THE FIGHT? I CAN USE A SWORD!
YURI ISHTAR IS AN EX-CEPTION

OH?
IS ANYTHING AMISS?
SIR, A SERVANT...
...IS STILL BUSY PREPARING YOUR ROOM.
PWFT
KLUNK
NO, SIR.
JUST A MINOR DETAIL...
CREAK
...
IF YOU THINK YOU CAN SHUT YOUR DOOR AND I'LL GO AWAY, YOU...


WELCOME HOME, SIR.
YOU SHOULD HAVE FINISHED SOME TIME AGO.
HUH... ILHANI'S ROOM.
I TRUST EVERY-THING IS IN ORDER NOW?
MY APOLO-GIES, SIR.
I FORGOT TO PLACE AROMATIC OIL...
...AT YOUR BEDSIDE. PLEASE FORGIVE ME.

WAIT!
WHY MOVE THIS RUG...
.. IF YOU WERE PLACING AROMATIC OIL BY MY BED?
MOVE THE RUG?
SIR, I DIDN'T...
IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME THIS RUG HAS BEEN DISTURBED..
.. SO I LEFT WHEAT FLOUR IN THE GAP BETWEEN THE PAVINGS.
THE FLOUR ISN'T THERE NOW.
SO SOMEONE MOVED THIS PARTICULAR STONE


GUARDS!
STOP THAT WOMAN!
DASH
ADHA? WHAT'S GOING ON?
LET GO OF ME! LET GO!
DESTROY IT...
DON'T BRING IT TO ME...
DESTROY IT EVEN IF IT COSTS YOU YOUR LIFE!

I WANT ANSWERS FROM HER!
DON'T LET THAT HAPPEN!
DASH
GRAB HER! SHE'S GOING TO JUMP!
DESTROY IT!
GASP
LET ME GO!

WHUP
AH!

WOOSH
PRINCESS ALEXANDRA!

CRASH
OH NOOOO!
ADHA...
...PLEASE EXPLAIN YOURSELF!
WHAT WAS ALL THAT ABOUT?!

SNAG
...
WHOMP
SIR! OH MY GOD!
SPLASH
URGH!
KOFF
UHH...
SPLOSH

ADHA!
WHAT HAVE I...
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
LISTEN ADHA...
...DO YOU REMEMBER WHO DID THIS TO YOU?
YOU'VE BEEN UNDER SOMEONE'S CONTROL.
HE WAS BLOND, WORE A BLACK CLOAK AND...AND HAD ONLY ONE EYE!
IT WAS A PRIEST!
Y-YES, SIR, I DO!

I'M SORRY, ILBANI!
A PRIEST WITH ONE EYE!
I'VE DONE SOMETHING... TERRIBLE!
...I COULDN'T REACH IT IN TIME! I'M SO SORRY!
I...I TRIED TO CATCH WHAT SHE THREW, BUT. .
ILBANI!
THIS WAS...
...PRETTY IMPORTANT, WASN'T IT!

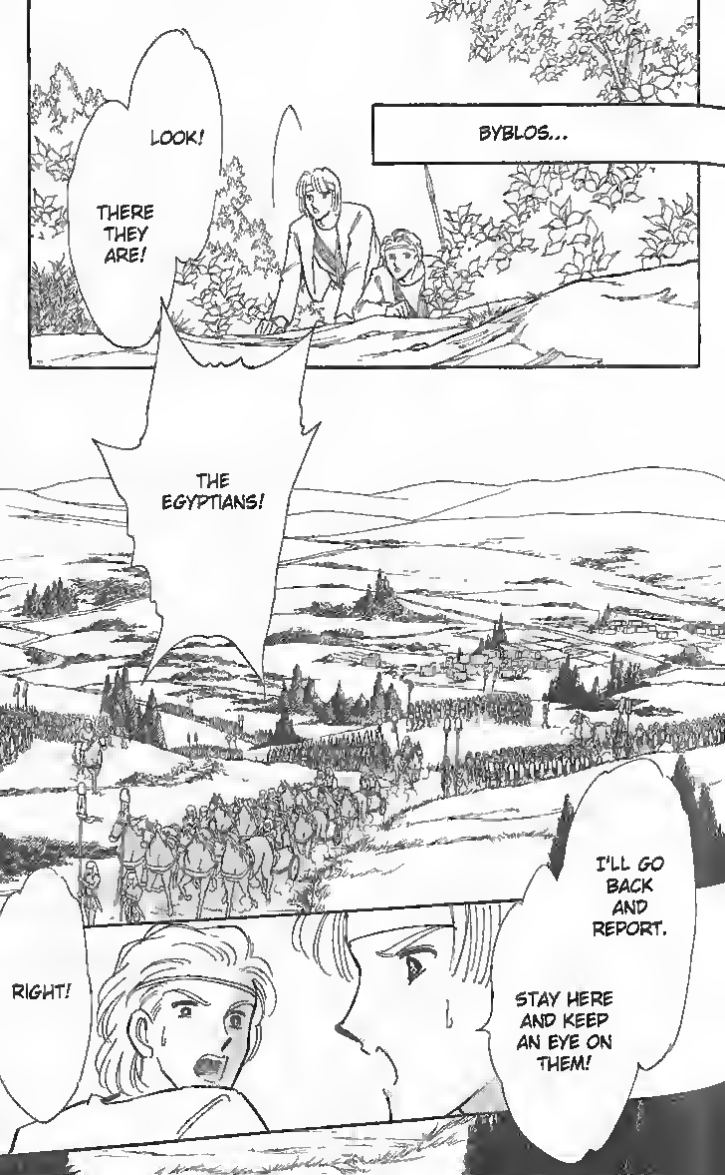
...BUT NOT IN THE WAY YOU THINK. IT WAS A DECOY...
YES IT WAS, HIGHNESS...
SMIRK
...FOR THE REAL ONE WHICH I KEEP WITH ME.
SO I TRIED TO SAVE A FAKE?
Boy, I feel stupid!
OH!

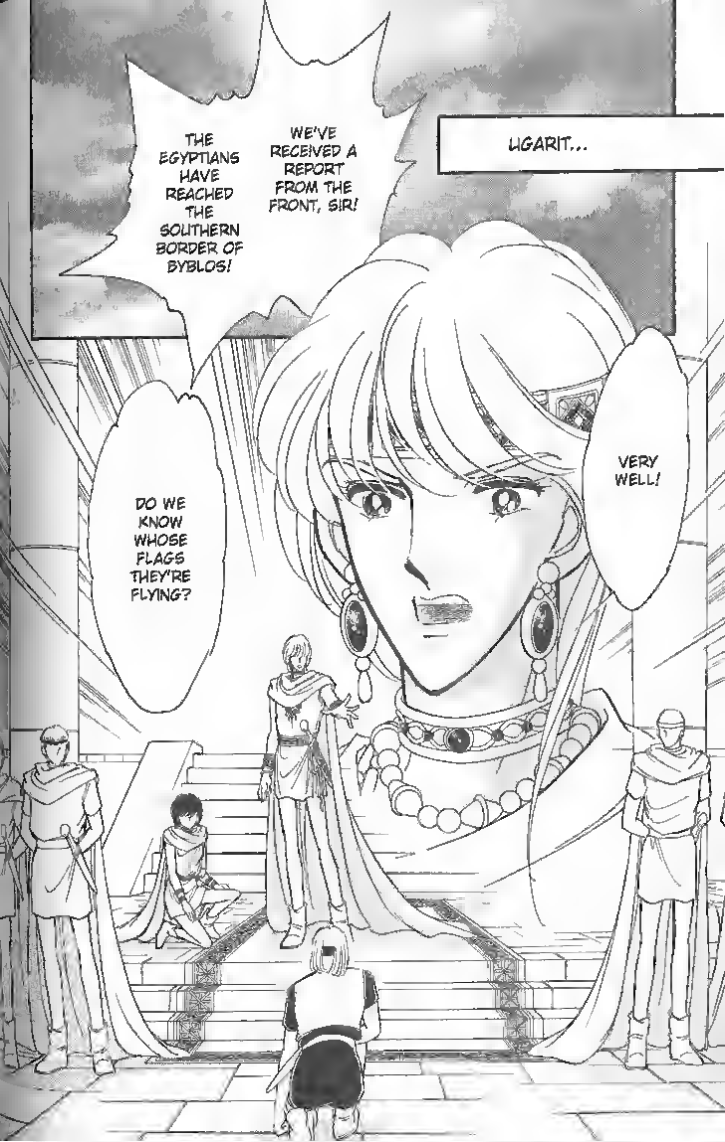
IT WAS A VALIANT EFFORT, AND I HOPE A VALUABLE LESSON.
YOU SEE, WIELDING A SWORD ISN'T ALL THERE IS TO FIGHTING AN ENEMY.
YOU AND I MAY NOT BE SOLDIERS, HIGHNESS...
...BUT WE MAKE OUR OWN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WAR EFFORT.

ILBANI, WILL YOU...
...REPORT THIS TO HIS MAJESTY AND ISHTAR?
IN DUE COURSE, HIGHNESS.
BUT I DON'T WANT TO DISTRACT THEM. THEY HAVE ENOUGH TO CONTEND WITH RIGHT NOW.
SECURE THE TOWN! LET NO ONE IN OR OUT WITHOUT MY AUTHORIZATION!
AND FIND THAT ONE-EYED PRIEST!
AT ONCE, SIR!

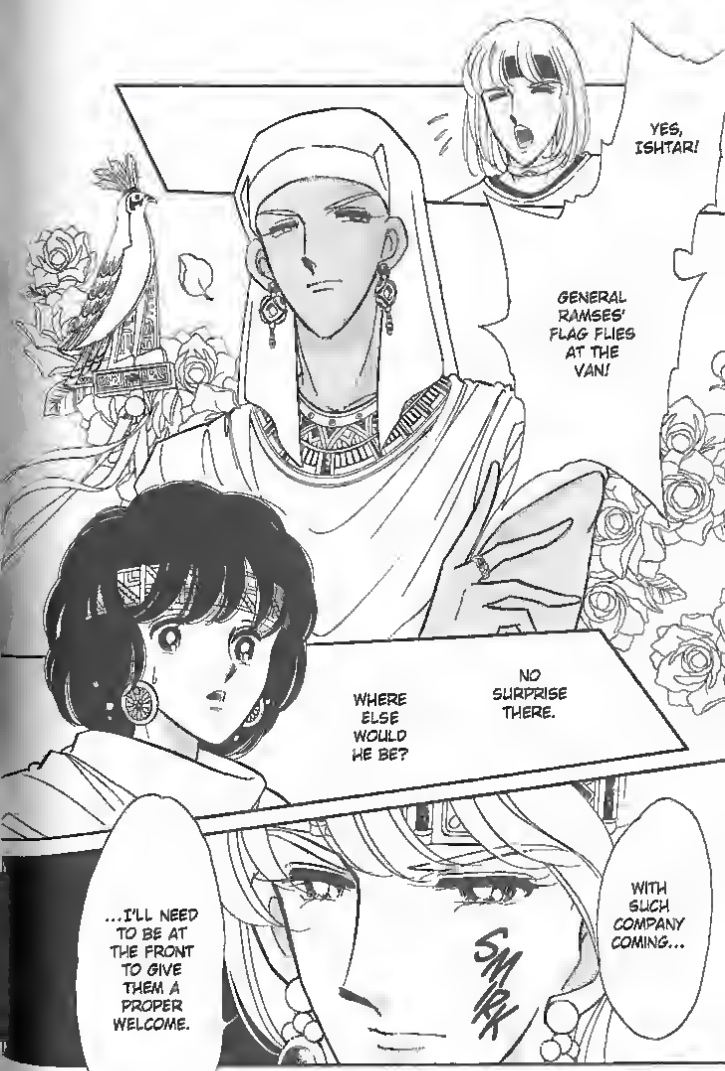
THIS PRIEST MUST BE URHI SHALMA, NAKIA'S RIGHT-HAND MAN.
IT'S PAST TIME HE WAS DEALT WITH!

SHF
I'VE WAITED FOR WORD, BUT... NOTHING.
I MUST ACCEPT THAT I'VE FAILED...
...AND FIND SOME OTHER WAY TO STOP THAT LETTER FROM REACHING HATTUSA!

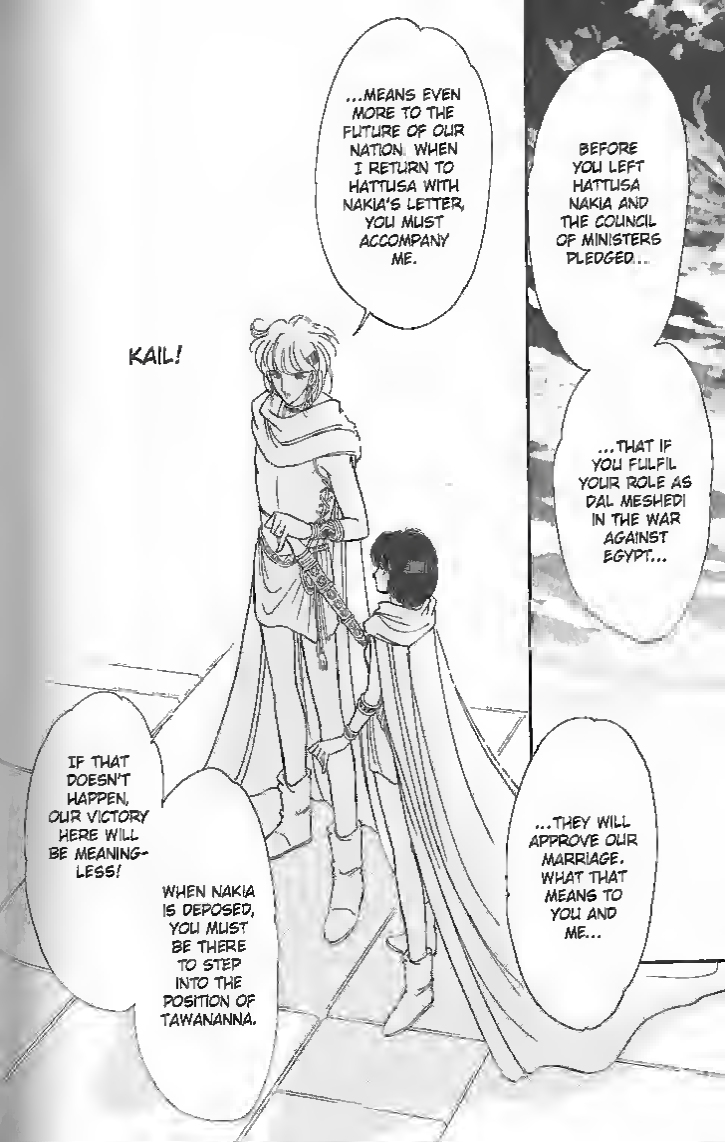

LOOK!
THERE THEY ARE!
BYBLOS...
THE EGYPTIANS!
I'LL GO BACK AND REPORT.
STAY HERE AND KEEP AN EYE ON THEM!
RIGHT!


UGARIT...
WE'VE RECEIVED A REPORT FROM THE FRONT, SIR!
THE EGYPTIANS HAVE REACHED THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF BYBLOS!
VERY WELL!
DO WE KNOW WHOSE FLAGS THEY'RE FLYING?

YES, SIR!
THEY'RE MARCHING UNDER PHARAOH HOREMHEB!
...AND HETEPHERES ARE ALSO DISPLAYED!
THE FLAGS OF GENERALS ANKTIK NEKEB...
HO!
ALL EXCELLENT WARRIORS.
AND RAMSES?
HAS *HIS* FLAG BEEN SPOTTED?


YES, ISHTAR!
GENERAL RAMSES' FLAG FLIES AT THE VAN!
NO SURPRISE THERE.
WHERE ELSE WOULD HE BE?
WITH SUCH COMPANY COMING...
SMIRK
...I'LL NEED TO BE AT THE FRONT TO GIVE THEM A PROPER WELCOME.

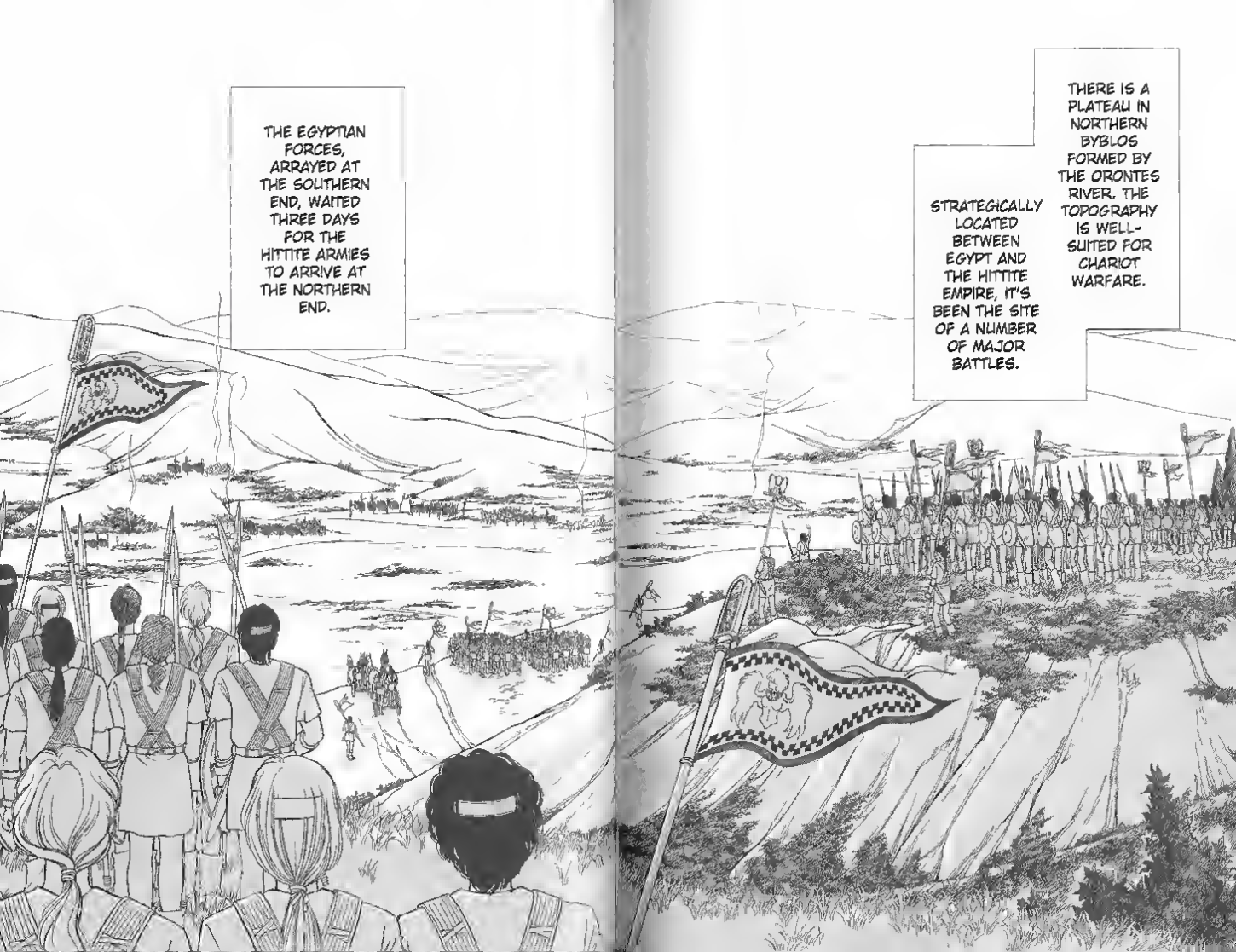
ROOARR
HIS MAJESTY IS GOING TO THE FRONT!
NOW COMES MY RE L TEST S DAL MESHEDI...
...KAIL'S COMM NDER-IN-CHIEF.
GULP
HEED ME, DAL MESHEDI.
YES, SIR?
NEVER FORGET THAT THERE IS MORE AT STAKE HERE THAN VICTORY OVER THE EGYPTIANS
WHAT?


BEFORE YOU LEFT HATTUSA NAKIA AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS PLEDGED..
...THAT IF YOU FULFIL YOUR ROLE AS DAL MESHEDI IN THE WAR AGAINST EGYPT...
...MEANS EVEN MORE TO THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION. WHEN I RETURN TO HATTUSA WITH NAKIA'S LETTER, YOU MUST ACCOMPANY ME.
KAIL!
...THEY WILL APPROVE OUR MARRIAGE. WHAT THAT MEANS TO YOU AND ME...
WHEN NAKIA IS DEPOSED, YOU MUST BE THERE TO STEP INTO THE POSITION OF TAWANANNA.
IF THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN, OUR VICTORY HERE WILL BE MEANING-LESS!

MORE NEWS FROM THE FRONT, SIR!
UGARIT TROOPS ARE FULLY ENGAGED WITH THE EGYPTIANS IN NORTH-EASTERN BYBLOS!
THINGS ARE MOVING FAST!
THE BATTLE HAS COMMENCED!
FRANKLY, I'M RELIEVED.
THE WAITING WAS GETTING TEDIOUS!
YANK
AWP!

YURI!
WATCH YOURSELF, OKAY?
BRING ME A VICTORY...
...AND RETURN ALIVE AND WELL!

WHAT'S THAT SAYING ...?
...THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT IT SIGNIFIES!
"FISH OR CUT BAIT!" I THINK...
COMMAND-ERS! GET YOUR UNITS MOVING!
WE HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH EGYPT IN BYBLOS!


THE EGYPTIAN FORCES, ARRAYED AT THE SOUTHERN END, WAITED THREE DAYS FOR THE HITTITE ARMIES TO ARRIVE AT THE NORTHERN END.
STRATEGICALLY LOCATED BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE HITTITE EMPIRE, IT'S BEEN THE SITE OF A NUMBER OF MAJOR BATTLES.
THERE IS A PLATEAU IN NORTHERN BYBLOS FORMED BY THE ORONTES RIVER. THE TOPOGRAPHY IS WELL-SUITED FOR CHARIOT WARFARE.

YES, SIR.
THE EGYPTIANS HAVE SELECTED AS FINE A BATTLEFIELD AS EITHER SIDE COULD ASK.
KAIL SOUNDS CONFIDENT, BUT HE HOLDS NO ADVANTAGE HERE.
I'M SURE HE KNOWS THAT

...MEET RAMSES ON EQUAL TERMS.
PERHAPS, AFTER ALL, HE PREFERS TO...
YOUR MAJESTY!
THE ARZAWAN TROOPS ARE ENGAGING GENERAL ANKTIK'S FORCES ON THE WESTERN SIDE!
HOREMHEB AND HIS TROOPS ARE STATIONED AT THE CENTER OF THE PLATEAU!
GENERAL RAMSES' FORCES ARE IN THE FORWARD POSITION, SERVING AS VANGUARD FOR THE PHARAOH!
SO THE PHARAOH WILL STAND BY...
...AND WATCH WHILE RAMSES AND I HAVE IT OUT.
THAT SUITS ME FINE.
I HOPE HE ENJOYS THE SHOW.

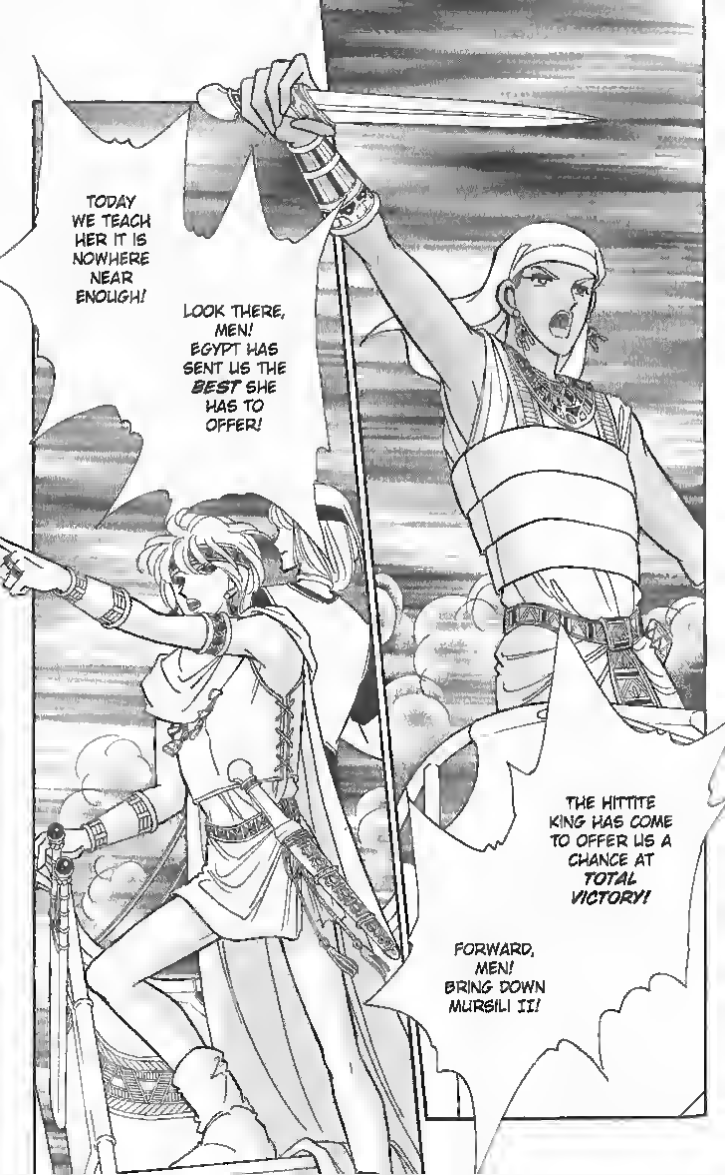
I GAVE UP MY WORLD, MY FAMILY, MY ERA FOR HIM.
IT'S BECAUSE OF KAIL...
...THAT I CHOSE TO REMAIN IN THIS WORLD AND TIME.

I'M HERE FOR HIM, AS HIS LOVER AND, RIGHT NOW, HIS DAL MESHEDI.
OKAY, RAMSES, BRING IT ON!

THEN WE'LL GO MEET THEM!
YOUR MAJESTY!
GASP
RAMSES' TROOPS ARE ADVANCING!
YURI, STAY HERE AND-
KLOP
EH?

HADI! YOU AND I WILL TAKE THE RIGHT!
YES, ISHTAR!
RUSAFA! YOU AND RYUI TAKE HIS MAJESTY'S LEFT FLANK!
RIGHT, YOUR MAJESTY?
NO DAL MESHEDI WOULD DARE COWER BEHIND HER MONARCH.
SHE'S... IMPOSSIBLE!

HARR RAAHAH
A TRULY SIGNAL HONOR!
I SEE THE KING'S FLAG...
...AND THE DAL MESHEDI'S
KLINK


TODAY WE TEACH HER IT IS NOWHERE NEAR ENOUGH!
LOOK THERE, MEN! EGYPT HAS SENT US THE *BEST* SHE HAS TO OFFER!
THE HITTITE KING HAS COME TO OFFER US A CHANCE AT *TOTAL VICTORY!*
FORWARD, MEN! BRING DOWN MURSILI II!

CLANK
STAB
ROAR
AAHH
ROAR

MY JOB IS TO PROTECT KAIL.
NOT NOW .. NOT EVER!
I'LL LET NO ENEMY NEAR HIM!
WHAT?!
OH MY GOD!
KLOP

ROAR
RAAAARR
BUT BOTH ARMIES ARE MAINTAINING FORMATION.
I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT HAPPEN BEFORE!
CLOSE COMBAT USUALLY LEADS TO DISORDER IN THE RANKS.
RAAH
THAT'S BECAUSE KAIL AND RAMSES COMMAND THEM...
...AND NEITHER IS GOING TO MAKE AN OBVIOUS BLUNDER.
KLANG
KLINK
THIS BATTLE MAY NOT BE OVER ANYTIME SOON.
YAAH

FORTUNE'S VAGARIES ALONE WILL DECIDE THIS BATTLE!
HOW LIKE YOU, MURSILI...
...TO BLUNT MY EVERY THRUST!
BRILLIANT, RAMSES!
YOUR TROOPS OFFER NO OPENINGS!

I'M OKAY!
PRIN-CESS YURI!
CLANG
KLINK
AT SOME POINT...
...THERE WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY!
ROAR
ROAR
ROAR
THE QUESTION IS, WHAT WILL IT BE?

WHERE IS IT?
AND WHO WILL BE THE BENEFICIARY?
WHERE IS IT?

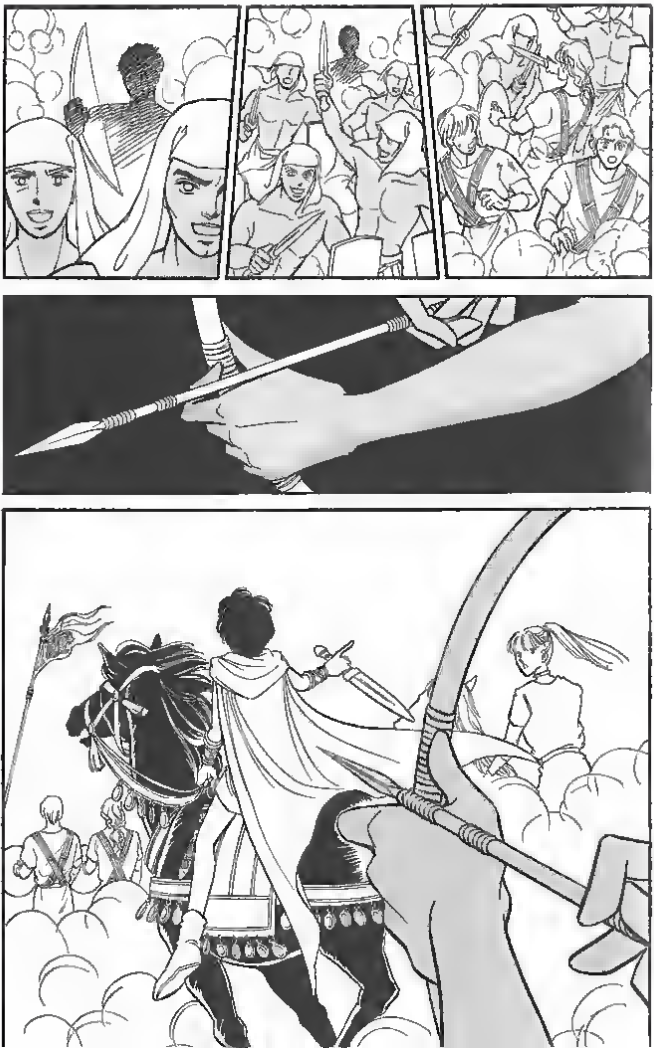
WHERE IS IT?
ZING
!!
AH!
SHWAK

WATCH OUT! THERE'S ANOTHER!
PRINCESS YURI!
KLOP
KLOP
ISHTAR! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
KLOP
THOOK
THUD
PLATOON COM-MANDER!
AAGH!

RAAAH
HURRA!!
WHERE'D THEY COME FROM?
AN ENEMY UNIT WAS LURKING IN AMBUSH!
GET THE INJURED TO THE REAR!
THE REST OF US WILL REPEL THIS ATTACK!

IF SO, IT'S A RECKLESS DIVISION OF A COMMANDER'S FOCUS IN A TIGHTLY COORDINATED ENGAGEMENT LIKE THIS!
...OR ARE MY TROOPS BEING SPECIFICALLY TARGETED?
CLA NG
KLI NK
A SIMPLE AMBUSH...
I CAN'T BELIEVE RAMSES WOULD RISK IT!

RUSAFA MUST HOLD HIS MAJESTY'S LEFT FLANK!
NO!
PRINCESS YURI!
SHALL I SIGNAL RUSAFA FOR HELP?
YAAGH!
AARGH!
THOOK
SLASH
FALL BACK! IN ORDER!
ATTEN-TION!



ARE YOU OKAY, PRINCESS YURI?
I'M FINE! HOW ABOUT YOU?
ASLAN!
SWING
SLUMP
HOOK

PRINCESS YURI!

TU
MP!

GASP
THUD

WHAT THE... YOU!

TAHARQA!
QUITE RIGHT.
I AM EXTREMELY HONORED...
...THAT YOU REMEMBER ME.

WHAT'S HAPPENING THERE?
ROAR
RAAH
ROAR
I GAVE STRICT ORDERS TO HOLD FORMATION ..
.. BUT THAT PLATOON'S BREAKING RANKS!
I'M SORRY, SIR!
TAHARQA SENT HIS PLATOON AT THE HITTITES' RIGHT FLANK!
THAT IDIOT! WHAT POSSESSED HIM?
WHO OPPOSES HIM THERE?

SIR!
THE DAL MESHEDI! SEE THE FLAG?
IT'S TRUE! THE DAL MESHEDI IS LEADING THAT FLANK!
THEIR DAL... YURI?!

TAHARQA...
.. THE EGYPTIAN WHO SIDED WITH ME WHEN I ORGANIZED A REBELLION AT ASWAN.
I DECEIVED HIM IN ORDER TO SAVE RAMSES, AND NEVER EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE THE REBELLION MATTER! HE MUST BELIEVE I BETRAYED HIM!
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE SURPRISED I'M STILL ALIVE?
OR PERHAPS YOU DON'T CARE IF I AM OR NOT!
AFTER ALL I WAS JUST A PAWN TO BE SACRIFICED TO YOUR SLIMY SUBTERFUGES!

YOU SHOULD KNOW...
...I JOINED THE EGYPTIANS FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF KILLING YOU!
I HEAR YOU, TAHARQA! BUT LISTEN...

AT LEAST GENERAL RAMSES PLAYED FAIR.
HE HEARD OUR GRIEVANCES, THOUGH HE WASN'T OBLIGED TO, AND HIS PUNISHMENTS WEREN'T EXCESSIVE.
TO WHAT? YOUR FEEBLE EXCUSES?
AS YOU SEE, HE EVEN LET ME JOIN HIS ARMY.

ALL TO SERVE SOME FOUL HITTITE SCHEME AGAINST EGYPT!
YOU USED US AND THEN TOSSED US ASIDE!
PLEASE, TAHARQA, HEAR ME OUT—
AND GENERAL RAMSES WILL BE PLEASED THAT THERE IS ONE LESS HITTITE SPY IN THE WORLD!
I WILL HEAR NOTHING FROM YOUR LYING LIPS!

TWONG
AGH!
ASLAN!

PRINCESS YURI!
BWRRR
CRAZY HORSE!
KLANK
KLOP KLOP
KLOP KLOP
WHUP

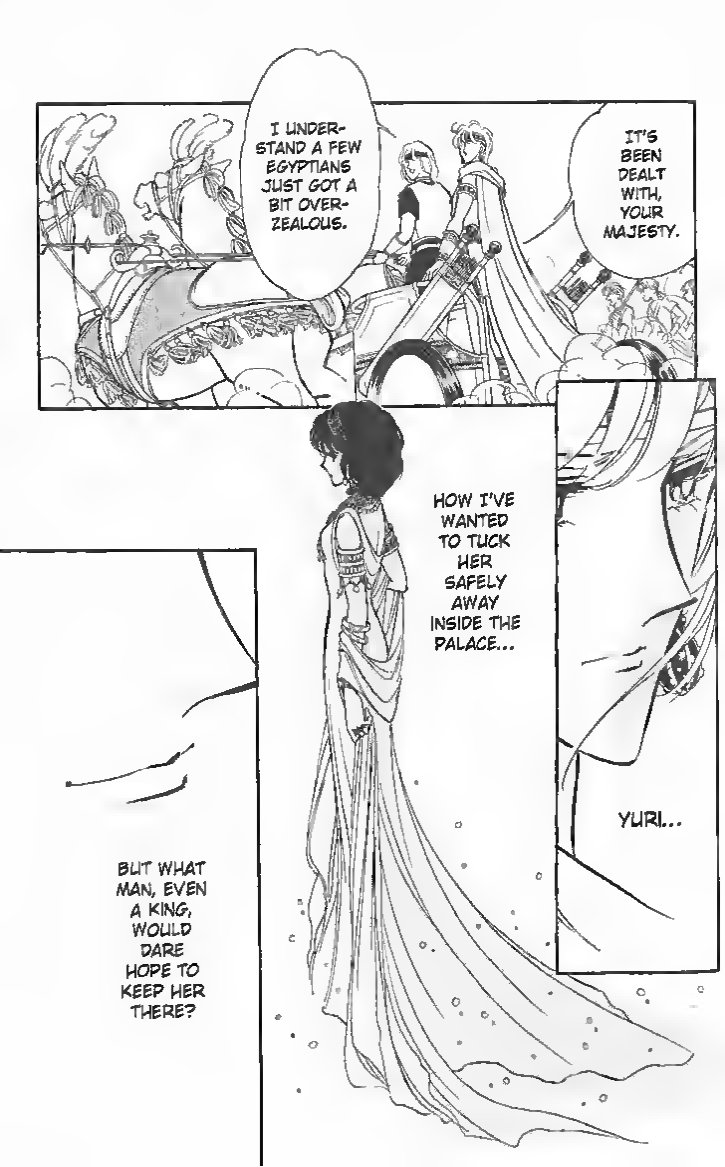
YANK
NO, I'M ALL RIGHT.
STOP FOR A SECOND, HADI!
KLOP
KLOP
KLOP
DID THAT MAN HURT YOU?
TAHARQA!
I'LL NEVER OFFER YOU ANY EXCUSES! I DID WHAT I DID, AND ACHIEVED WHAT I SET OUT TO ACHIEVE!
BUT NOT HERE, AND NOT NOW! OR DO YOU THINK SO LITTLE OF GENERAL RAMSES THAT YOU WOULD UPSET HIS BATTLE PLAN LIKE THIS?!
YES, I BETRAYED YOU! AND I WILL NOT DENY YOU THE RIGHT TO SEEK JUSTICE FOR THAT!

VERY WELL, ISHTAR! ANOTHER DAY!
A DAY OF RECK-ONING!
PRIN-CESS YURI...
LET'S GO, HADI.
HE CAUGHT ME OFF GUARD...
...BUT ONLY MEANT TO AVENGE HIMSELF.
THE OVERALL BATTLE SHOULDN'T BE AFFECTED.
OKAY!
WHEN IT COMES TO BIG DECISIONS...
...ABOUT THE TWISTS AND TURNS OF LIFE...
...IT'S AWFULLY HARD TO KNOW WHICH PATH TO CHOOSE.
TA-RU MP

TA-RAMP
ASLAN?
TA-RAMP
IN THE END, ALL I CAN DO...
...IS TAKE THE ONE THAT SEEMS BEST.
TA-RAMP
YANK
KLOP
KLOP
KLOP
HOW RIGHT NEFERTITI WOULD BE TO SAY, "I TOLD YOU SO!"
I SHOULD HAVE TOLD HIM THAT FROM THE BEGINNING. NOW I MUST ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT LAPSE.
TAHARQA DOESN'T REALIZE THAT BY HELPING TO SAVE RAMSES, THE REBELLION ACHIEVED FAR MORE THAN IT WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE.

TODAY THERE IS A WAR TO FIGHT... AND WIN!
THERE WILL BE A RECKONING, TAHARQA, BUT NOT TODAY!

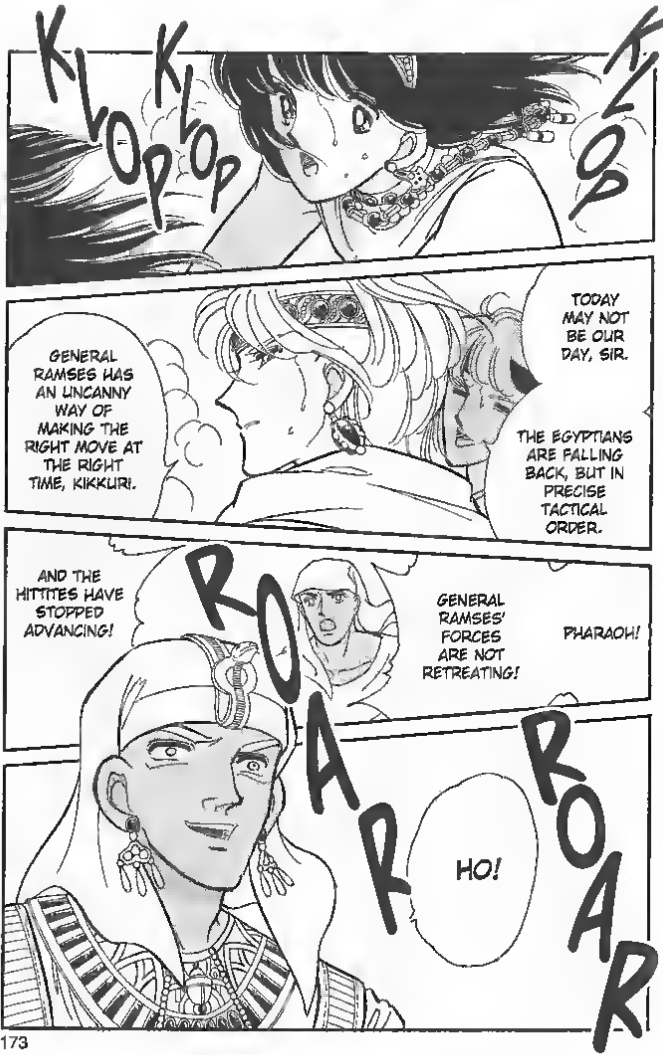
THE ORDER NOW IS— ATTACK!
THAT AMBUSH WAS JUST A DIVERSION!
GET BACK INTO FORMATION, ON THE DOUBLE!
RROAARRRR
I SAW SIGNS OF A SKIRMISH INVOLVING A LATERAL ATTACK OVER THERE!
HOW'S YURI DOING?
IS SHE HOLDING THE RIGHT FLANK?


I UNDERSTAND A FEW EGYPTIANS JUST GOT A BIT OVER-ZEALOUS.
IT'S BEEN DEALT WITH, YOUR MAJESTY.
HOW I'VE WANTED TO TUCK HER SAFELY AWAY INSIDE THE PALACE...
YURI...
BUT WHAT MAN, EVEN A KING, WOULD DARE HOPE TO KEEP HER THERE?

THIS MAY BE OUR BEST CHANCE TO DRIVE THROUGH AND STOP THEIR ADVANCE!
THE EGYPTIAN'S RIGHT FLANK IS STRETCHED THIN!
CONCENTRATE ON THAT!
ROAR
RAAH
ROAR

WE'LL PLAY OUT SOME ROPE! FALL BACK, IN FORMATION— SLOWLY!
SHORE UP THAT RIGHT FLANK!
GENERAL RAMSES! PHARAOH HOREMHEB SENDS HIS REGARDS AND WISHES TO INFORM YOU...
...HE IS LEADING HIS CONTINGENT TO THE HILL BEHIND HIM, AND HAS ORDERED ALL UNITS AT THE FRONT TO RETREAT!
WHAT?
HE'S ORDERING A RETREAT *NOW*?!
WHILE OUR GENERALS ARE STILL FIGHTING?!

THAT MESSAGE WAS NOT RECEIVED.
SIR?
I AM HERE TO ENGAGE AND DEFEAT THE HITTITES!
THIS BATTLE IS STILL OURS TO WIN!
RAHAHAHA


KLOP
KLOP
KLOP
TODAY MAY NOT BE OUR DAY, SIR.
THE EGYPTIANS ARE FALLING BACK, BUT IN PRECISE TACTICAL ORDER.
GENERAL RAMSES HAS AN UNCANNY WAY OF MAKING THE RIGHT MOVE AT THE RIGHT TIME, KIKKURI.
PHARAOH!
GENERAL RAMSES' FORCES ARE NOT RETREATING!
AND THE HITTITES HAVE STOPPED ADVANCING!
ROAR
ROAR
HO!

PHARAOH! I'M SORRY, I MUST KEEP MY ATTENTION ON THE BATTLE.
YOU CAN, HOWEVER, WITNESS A GLORIOUS TRIUMPH.
RAMSES!
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
YOU'VE DONE WELL, GENERAL RAMSES.
YOU WILL RECEIVE DUE CREDIT FOR YOUR WORK THIS DAY.
BUT IT'S TIME FOR ME TO TAKE COMMAND.
!!

EXCUSE ME, PHARAOH, BUT HE'S *MY* OPPONENT!

THIS DISPLEASES YOU?

AS PHARAOH, AM I NOT THE ONE TO TOPPLE THE HITTITE KING?

...IT MUST BE THE PHARAOH WHO DEFEATS THE ENEMY!

TO PRESERVE THE HONOR OF EGYPT...

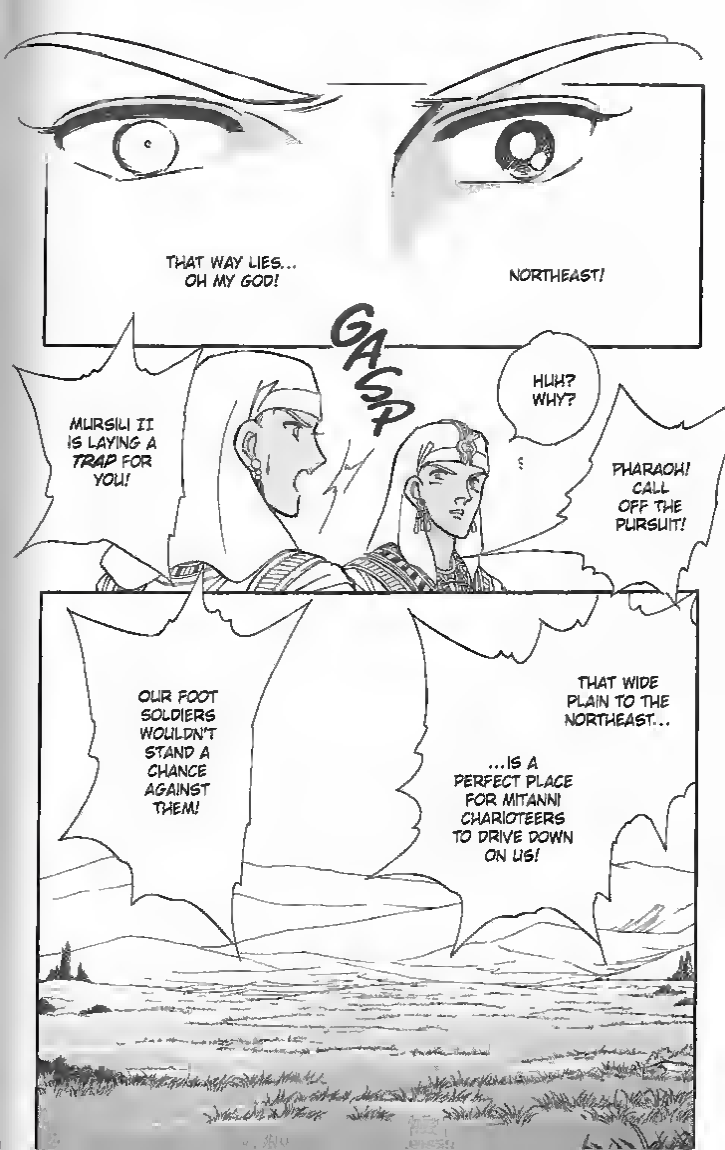
TAKE CARE, GENERAL!

THE HONOR OF EGYPT?! WHICH YOU BRING UP ONLY AFTER IT APPEARS VICTORY IS AT HAND?!

HONOR, IT SEEMS, IS ***FRAGILE*** INDEED!

ROAR
ROAR
PERHAPS DUE TO A CHANGE OF COMMAND?
I SEE A SHIFT IN EGYPTIAN ACTIVITY, SIR!
...HOREM-HEB HAS RELIEVED RAMSES.
I'D SAY...
VERY UNWISE...

PHARAOH!
THE HITTITES ARE RETREATING!
BUT IT MEANS WE'VE CAUGHT A BREAK!
HAVE ALL UNITS KEEP FORMATION AND FALL BACK!
ROAR
ALL UNITS! INITIATE PURSUIT!
TURNING TAIL, EH?
ROAR
I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF THIS!
WHAT'S THE DIRECTION OF THEIR RETREAT?
TO THE ORTHEAST, SIR.
WHAT?!

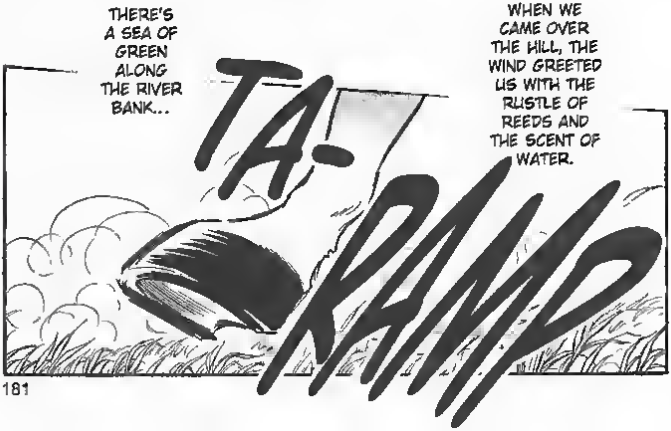

THAT WAY LIES... OH MY GOD!
NORTHEAST!
GASP
MURSILI II IS LAYING A TRAP FOR YOU!
HUH? WHY?
PHARAOH! CALL OFF THE PURSUIT!
OUR FOOT SOLDIERS WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST THEM!
THAT WIDE PLAIN TO THE NORTHEAST...
...IS A PERFECT PLACE FOR MITANNI CHARIOTEERS TO DRIVE DOWN ON US!

FEH!
BEYOND LIES THE ORONTES. WE'LL PUSH THOSE CHARIOTS RIGHT INTO THE RIVER.
YOU SPEAK AS IF IT'S POSSIBLE I MIGHT LOSE TO THE HITTITES.
AND YOU THINK MURSILI II WON'T HAVE THOUGHT TO SECURE A CROSSING POINT?
I BEG YOU, PHARAOH, DON'T BE LURED IN LIKE THIS.
THAT, GENERAL, IS NOT VERY RESPECTFUL.

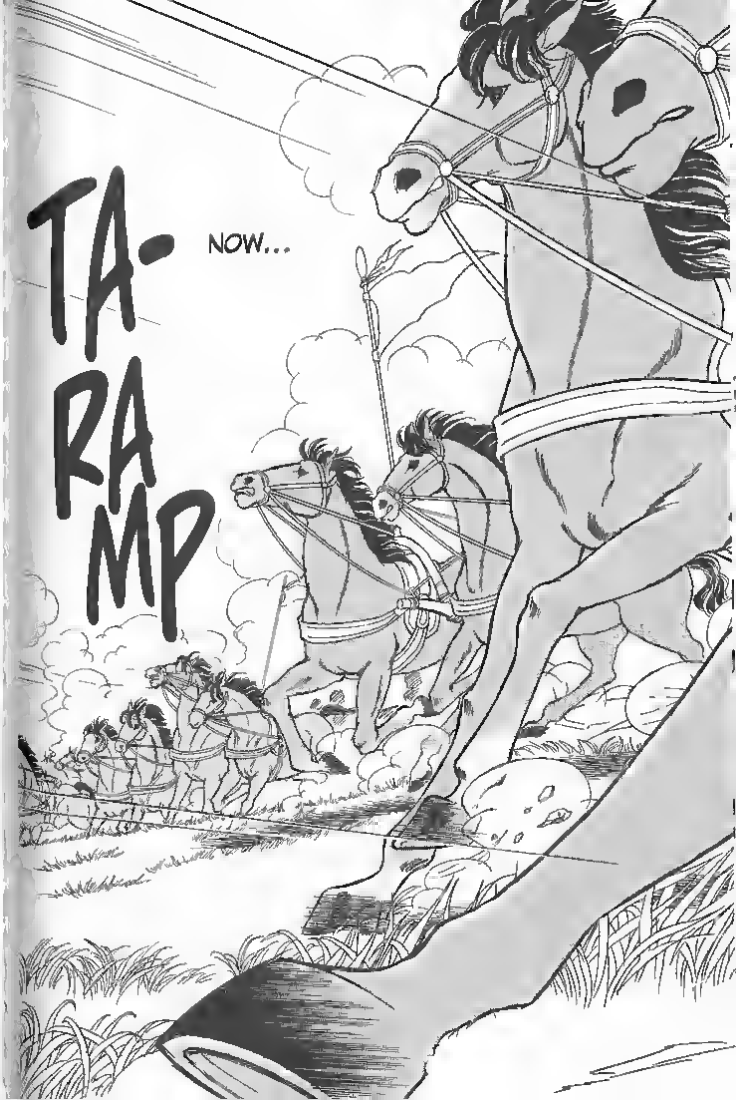
YOU FORGET OUR GLORIOUS HISTORY ON THAT PLAIN!
KING TOTOMESU FOUGHT THERE OVER A HUNDRED YEARS AGO...
...AND EXPANDED EGYPTIAN DOMINANCE TO KARKEMISH. I SHALL DO NO LESS!

HMPH! IF WARS WERE DECIDED BY THE VOICE OF HISTORY....
...FAR FEWER SOLDIERS WOULD TAKE EARLY JOURNEYS INTO ETERNAL SHADOW
SIR? AREN'T WE...
...GOING WITH THEM?
ROAR
FORWARD! DRIVE THE HITTITES...
...INTO THE ORONTES RIVER!
ROAR
ROAR

TA-RAMP
TA-RAMP
TA-RAMP
THE EGYPTIANS ARE PURSUING.
INDEED.


THERE'S A SEA OF GREEN ALONG THE RIVER BANK...
WHEN WE CAME OVER THE HILL, THE WIND GREETED US WITH THE RUSTLE OF REEDS AND THE SCENT OF WATER.
TA-
RAMP

TA-RAMP
TA-RAMP
...THE AIR IS FILLED WITH THE RUMBLE OF MITANNI CHARIOTS!
TA-RAMP
TA-RAMP
TA-RAMP


NOW...
TA-
RA
MP

THE EGYPTIANS HAVE CHARGED...
...STRAIGHT INTO THE GRINDER!

YURI! WHAT HAVE YOU TO REPORT?
KLOP KLOP
KLOP
KAIL!
I MEAN, YOUR MAJESTY!

...HOW FAR TO PRESS IT UNTIL YOU DECLARE VICTORY?
THE BATTLE IS PROCEEDING AS PLANNED, BUT WILL YOU TELL US...

...I'LL OFFER OUR ADVERSARY A PEACE TREATY.
I ONLY ASK FOR ONE THING, DAL MESHEDI...
...A CLEAR ESTABLISHMENT OF OUR SUPERIORITY. ONCE WE HAVE THAT...

ONE GIANT STRIDE TOWARDS KAIL'S DREAM!

WELL...
...WE'VE LOST AGAIN.
BUT, SIR, IT'S NOT OVER! THE PHARAOH'S STILL FIGHTING!
WHAT I FIND INTOLERABLE...
...IS THAT BUMBLER SNATCHING AWAY MY CHANCE TO FACE MURSILI!
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE SURRENDERS.
SOMETIMES, SOLDIER, WE MUST ACCEPT THE INEVITABLE.
THOSE MITANNI CHARIOTS ARE FAR MORE THAN PHARAOH CAN HANDLE.

NOTHING TO BE DONE ABOUT IT, THOUGH.
THE ONE CONSOLATION IS...
...MURSILI AND I LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY!